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"THE THIRD DEGREE"

"THE THIRD DEGREE"

A PLAY IN FOUR ACTS

— BY —

CHARLES KLEIN

PS3521
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1908

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Apr. 13, 1908
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C H A R A C T E RS.

HOWARD JEFFRIES, Sr.

HOWARD JEFFREIS, Jr.

MRS. ALICIA JEFFIRES: Wife of Howard Jeffries, Sr.

MRS. ANNIE JEFFRIES: Wife of Howard Jeffries, Jr.

ROBERT UNDERWOOD:

MRS. BENNINGTON:

RICHARD BREWSTER:

DR. BERNSTEIN:

CAPTAIN CLINTON:

DET. SERG. MALONEY:

POLICE OFFICER:

JONES:

"THE THIRD DEGREE".

ACT I.

Underwood's art studio.

This scene represents the room of a man of artistic tastes who sells on commission antiquities--bric-a-brac, curios, pictures, statues, etc, etc. It is most tastefully designed to set off the various art creations a grand piano covered with valuable bronzes, birc-a-brac, vases, etc. The entire setting is professionally artistic. There is a decanter of whiskey and glass on table, also cigars, cigarettes, match, ash tray, etc., etc., and all the paraphanalia of a well-appointed apartment.

As Curtain rises -- UNDERWOOD is discovered reading a paper. He has a cigar in his mouth which he has not yet lighted. After a few moments he sighs -- appears to think a moment, then puts cigar on ash tray, unlit, as if he did not have ambition enough to smoke. His reverie is broken by a telephone ring. Business of answering it.

Underwood

Send - him - up.

(Underwood's face betrays fear and anxiety and he waits anxiously till Bennington enters. Bennington is the manager of a big firm of art dealers -- Underwood looks up -- then rises.)

Bennington -- this is a surprise.

Bennington

Yes.

Underwood

Sit down.

Bennington

I haven't time -- thank you -- my mission is rather a delicate

one, Mr. Underwood.

Underwood

The art and antique business is a delicate business -- God knows it's a precarious one -- Have a drink?

Bennington

No thank you -- I've come to warn you, Mr. Underwood, that the firm is about to ask you to return their property --
(Points around.)
everything.

Underwood

Why -- I've sold lots of things for them at big prices.

Bennington

I know but -- the fact is Mr. Underwood they've received information that you've sold many of their valuable art objects for which they've received nothing at all.

Underwood

That's not true --
(Pause.)
Have a cigar?

Bennington

No thanks.

Underwood

(Bus. throws down his own cigar.) I can account for everything -- if they'll give me time -- they must give me time -- I'm hard-pressed -- my expenses are enormous, and-- I'm much obliged to you Bennington for warning me --

Bennington

It may give you time to get the money or to get the things back.

Underwood

I can get them all back in -- in time -- damn it -- it costs money to keep up appearance -- society people won't buy if they think you need the money -- and I've had to spend it

like water to get them even to look at them -- give me a month.

Bennington

They're coming to-morrow -- I promised I'd let you know and I can do no more --

Underwood

To-morrow --

(Bus -- pause.)

Bennington, how did they come to -- to suspect?

Bennington

When you tried,to sell these things to old Defries for one quarter their value he recognized where they came from and went right straight to the firm -- there's a man outside watching now --

Underwood

Then it's all up, eh? No extension? No chance --no --

(Telephone bell rings.)

Bennington

Not a minute --

(Pause.)

Well, I've kept my promise.

Underwood

(At telephone.) I can't see him -- tell him I'm -- I'm -- don't go Bennington. It's only that infernal nuisance Howard Jeffries --

(Bus--hangs up telephone mechanically.)

Bennington

I must --

(Bus. looks L.)

I don't see the Velasquez --

Underwood

No -- it's -- it's out -- on -- on probation -- I can account for everything.

Bennington

And the Gobelins ---

Underwood

Everything -- if they give me time -- You know what it means Bennington -- the position I've made for,myself wil be swept away -- and --

(Sighs.)

After all -- it doesn't matter.

(Enter Howard Jeffries D. L. He is a Post Graduate type of college man, refined but dissipated appearance, good-natured, carelessly dressed -- handsome face marred by weakness and dissipation -- about 25 years of age. He has been drinking slightly -- Underwood is obviously annoyed.)

Howard

The attendant didn't seem to be sure -- so I came up-- sorry if I'm butting in --

Underwood

(Coldly.) Glad to see you --

Howard

You don't look it.

Underwood

(Pause.) Mr. Bennington -- Mr. Howard Jeffries, Junior.

Howard

Oh I know Bennington -- bought an elephant's tusk at his place in the days when I was somebody -- Nobody now---couldn't even buy an ivory collar button.

(Pours himself out a drink -- much to Underwood's annoyance -- Bennington notices this, shakes his head.)

Do you remember that wonderful set of Ivory chess men the old man bought?

Bennington

Yes sir -- Ah! mYour father was a fine art critic --

Howard

Art critic -- he can criticize any old thing -- every old thing -- I don't care what it,is -- he dan criticize it -- when in doubt criticize -- is nailed on father's escutcheon.

(Drinks.)

Here's how --

Bennington

Well, good-night, Mr. Jeffries -- good-night, Mr. Underwood-

Underwood

Good-night --
(Exit Bennington D. L.)

Howard

Excuse my butting in but -- why so chop fallen -- so-- downcast -- what a long face! Is that the way you greet a classmate, a fellow frat? Wait till you hear my hard-luck story; that'll cheer you up -- who was it who said- "there's nothing cheers us up so much as the other fellow's tragedy?" First, I'll pour out a drink -- I need courage old man -- I've got a favor to ask -- I want some money-- I not only want it -- I need it --
(Underwood laughs.)
I told you I'd cheer you up! I don't want to remind you of that little matter of 250 bucks you borrowed from me two years ago -- I suppose you've forgotten it -- but --

Underwood

Well!

Howard

I'm not reminding you old chap, but -- when the family kicked me out for marrying the finest girl that ever lived -- my father cut me off with a piking allowance which I told him to put in the church plate. I told him I preferred independence -- well, I've got my independence but I'm -- I'm broke- I can't find any business that I'm fitted for and she threatens to go back to work -- I won't stand for that -- I won't be supported by any woman---and I thought of you--you're a successful art collector -- have a big name--made lots of money and all that --
(Bus. with whiskey.)
'Tain't the two fifty old man -- I don't want that---

Underwood

Well, what do you want?

Howard

I want a couple of thousand --

Underwood

A couple of thousand --
(Laughs.)

Howard

Gee, I'm a hit, eh? I knew I'd cheer you up --
(Drinks.)
I don't seem to get down to anything-- my ideas won't stay in one place -- I got a position as time keeper, but I didn't hold it down a week -- I kept the time all right, but it wasn't the right time --
(Bus. with whiskey.)
They're so damn particular --

Underwood

You keep pretty good time with that --
(Points to whiskey.)

Howard

It's the one thing I do punctually -- and perfectly I can row, swim, play tennis -- football--golf and polo with anybody, but I'll be damned if I can do anything quite as well as I do this --

Underwood

Why don't you go home and ask your father?

Howard

After being turned out like a dog -- with a young wife on my hands -- not much -- no -- I've injured their pride -- You know father married a second time -- loaded me down with a step-mother. She's all right, but she's so confoundedly aristocratic--you know her--Say, didn't you and she---wasn't there some sort of an engagement once---seems to me I--

Underwood

I'd rather you wouldn't mention that matter.
(Pause.)
I'm very busy now--if you could postpone---

Howard

Underwood, I'm an outcast--a derelict in the ocean of life--as one of my highly aristocratic uncles wrote me--and his grandfather was an iron puddler---Ha! My family makes me sick -- I'm no good because I married the girl. If I'd have ruined her life, and cast her aside, I'd still be a respectable member of the family --
(Pours out whiskey.)

Underwood

No Hward -- you wouldn't make a respectable member of any family --

Howard

P'r'aps not --

Underwood

How does Annie take her social ostracism?

Howard

Like a brick -- thoroughbred -- all to the good--she's one of the few women I know that improves on acquaintance -- she's all right.

Underwood

I'm sorry I never introduced you to her -- I never thought you'd make such a fool of yourself as to marry --

Howard

Don't know whether I made a fool of myself or not -- she's got the makings of a great woman --very crude but still--- the makings. The only thing I object to is, she insists on going back to work -- just as if I'd permit such a thing -- you know what I said to her on our wedding day? Mrs. Howard Jeffries, you are entering one of the oldest families in America -- nature has fitted you for social leadership-- You will be a petted, pampered member of that elect -- select a few called the Knickerbocker set--and now, damn it all, how can I let her go back to work--if you let me have that two thousand --

(Lays back on sofa.)

Underwood

I haven't got it -- I'm in debt up to my eyes --
(Bus. Howard looks around.)

Howard

What's all -- all this---bluff?

Underwood

A bluff -- that's it. Not a picture -- not a vase--not a stick belongs to me -- You'll have to go to your father--

Howard

Not on your life--
(Bus. with whiskey.)

Underwood

He'll relent.

Howard

He relent! Ha! Too much brains -- too much up here--
(Bus.)
Too little down here.
(Indicates heart.)
Once get an idea---never lets it go -- holds on--obstinate--
(Drowsily.)
My God--how obstinate that man is ---seems impossible he can be my father--one idea--stick to it--
(Bus. reaches out for whiskey, Underwood takes it away.)
Gee, but I've made a mess of things, haven't I?

Underwood

You've made a mess of your life but you've had some measure of happiness -- at least,you married the woman you love -- drunken beast as you are -- I envy you -- the woman I wanted married someone else---d... her.

Howard

(Drowsily.) Say, old man, I didn't come here to hear hard luck -- came to tell one--If you can't be cheerful--don't say anything---
(Bus. very drowsy--his head nods---telephone rings-- bus. Underwood answers it.)

Underwood

Who?
(His face lights up -- pause.)
Yes, I'm in --
(Pause.)
I'll come down -- No--hello---tell her to come up--
(Pause.)
Yes--
(Bus. hangs up receiver.)
Jeffries--Jeffries --
(Looks at Howard closely -- sees that he is asleep.)
Wake up -- wake up you--confound you--wake up.
(Shakes him.)

Howard

Sure --
(Sleepily.)
Porter, will you kindly make up my berth?
(Underwood-bus. rubs his eyes. Knock at door- Underwood looks closely at Howard---sees that he is asleep--that it is hopeless to try and awaken him--pulls a screen around sofa that he cannot

be seen, then goes to D. L. and opens it.
Enter Mrs. Howard Jeffries, Sr.)

Underwood

You've come -- this is the answer to my letter.

Mrs. Jeffries

The answer should be a horsewhip -- how dare you write me such a letter --
(Bus. with letter.)
What do you expect to gain by this threat?

Underwood

Sit down, Alicia.

Mrs J

Don't call me by that name--

Underwood

You've forbidden me everything -- to love you -- to speak to you -- even to think of you. When you broke your engagement with me and married old Howard Jeffries to gratify your social ambition--you---you didn't destroy my love--you can't destroy it.

Mrs J

I broke my engagement with you because I found that you were deceiving me--that, you had deceived others--Oh we need not go into that---I ask you again--what do you expect to gain by threatening to take your own life unless I---continue to be your friend -- what do you mean by your friend--How can I be the friend of a man like you? You know what your friendship for a woman means... You are as incapable of disinterested friendship as you are of common honesty.

Underwood

Alicia, for the sake of old memories--

Mrs J

There are no old memories--not one--you have humiliated me by compelling me to come to you and ask you to promise me not to --not to carry out your threat. Will you promise me not to -- to---

Underwood

I---I won't promise anything---

Mrs J

But you must -- you must give me your word not to do this awful thing.

Underwood

No --

(Shakes his head.)

Mrs J

You won't -- you won't promise me --

Underwood

If my life has no interest for you--why should you care?

Mrs J

But --

(Bus. with letter.)

you accuse me of being the cause -- of driving you to your death -- I--who have been your friend in spite of your dishonesty---Oh, it's despicable--ungrateful--and above all, it's untrue --

Underwood

My love for you is my excuse.

Mrs J

If you had loved me you would have spared me this indignity.

Underwood

Why did you come here?

Mrs J

I was afraid you meant what you said--the shame of being associated with a man who--who--took his own life--Oh--it's horrible--

Underwood

That's it--you're afraid that some scandal may attach itself to the name of the exclusive Mrs. Howard Jeffries, Senior.

Mrs J

You know how Mr. Jeffries has suffered through the wretched marriage of his only son--with the daughter of a saloon-keeper. You know how deeply we both feel this disgrace--and yet you would add--

Underwood

Why should I consider your husband's feelings? He didn't consider mine when he married you--Alicia -- I'm desperate--I'm hemmed in on all sides by creditors--you know what your friendship--your patronage means? If you drop me now your friends will follow--they're a lot of sheep led by you--

Mrs J

That is precisely why I protect them -- they are my friends--they trust me--you have borrowed their money-- stolen from them--and my friendship for you has given you the opportunity-but now that I have found you out, and I refuse to sacrifice my friends-- myself-respect--my sense of decency--youtake this means of compelling me -- well, you've failed---I will not sanction your robbing my friends. I will not allow you to sell them any more of your high priced rubbish--or permit you to cheat them at cards.

Underwood

Then I --

(Bus.)

Alicia -- if you desert me now you'll be sorry till the day of your death.

Mrs J

You mean you'll---you'll kill yourself?

(Underwood looks at her but does not reply.)

Answer me!

Underwood

I mean --

(Pause--he suggests that he means to kill himself.)

Just what I said in that letter ---

Mrs J

(Looking at him in silence. Then.) I don't believe it--your object is to frighten me -- well, I should have known from the first---you have no more idea of taking your own life than I have. I might have spared myself the humiliation of this meeting --

(Pause.)

Underwood

Is that all you have to say?

Mrs J

All -- except this --let it be thoroughly understood that

your presence at Mrs. Jeffries house is undesirable--and if we should meet you at the house of any of my friends, I shall explain my attitude.

(Underwood bows acquiescence. She turns as if to go, then pauses.)

Won't you tell me that you didn't mean what you said in your letter?

Underwood

I'll tell you nothing--

Mrs J

I don't believe that a man who is coward enough to write a letter like this has the courage to carry out his threat-I should have thrown it in the waste basket. Good-night.

Underwood

(Mechanically.) Good-night.

(Exits Mrs. Jeffries D. L. The door bangs. Underwood looks around hopelessly -- sighs deeply--goes up stage slowly as if in deep thought--presses button--lights out. Moonlight in through windows. Red glow of fire on sleeping figure of Howard Jeffries behind screen. Underwood locks door L. walks off R. Slowly closes door R. Pause. Pistol shot heard off R. then the falling of a body is heard---then the curtain falls slowly and remains down for twenty seconds.)

END OF SCENE I -- ACT I.

SCENE 2-- As lights go up, discovered Howard Jeffries, Clinton, Captain of Police, Detective Sergeant Maloney. Police officer up stage at D.L.. Howard is being interrogated by Captain Clinton and is now quite sober. He is pale and frightened. The position of the furniture is slightly changed.

Captain Clinton

You did it and you know you did--

Howard

No---I---

Capt C

Well we know you did---eh--

(Bus. with Maloney)

These persistent denials are useless---the evidence is here--

Howard

I --

(Shakes his head helplessly.)

I'm ~~xxx~~ so upset---good God! What's the use of questioning me and questioning me? I know nothing--of this--

Capt C

Why did you come here?

Howard

I told you---we're old friends---I came to borrow money-- He owed me a few dollars when we were at college together-- and I tried to get it -- I've told you so many times--and you won't believe --hour after hour---hour after hour----question after question---I can't think anymore ---won't you please let me go---my wife will be waiting up--and---why it must be morning -- I'm tired out ---tired out--I want to go home and-- my head aches---

Capt C

How much did you try to borrow?

Howard

Nearly a thousand -- two thousand--I forget -- I think one thousand. I've told you so many times---

Capt C

Did he say he'd lend you the money?

Howard

No -- he -- he--couldn't--he---poor chap, he---

Capt C

He refused---that lead to words -- there was a quarrel--and you shot him --

Howard

No---no---there was no quarrel--no words--no--I swear there wasn't --

Capt C

He was found on the floor dead -- in that room --nyou were trying to get out of the house -- without being seen -- you pretended you' been drinking ---

Howard

I fell asleep on that sofa when I woke up---it was dark-- and--I went out. I wanted to get home--we needed money-- I wanted to tell her I couldn't get it--she was going out to work the first thing in the morning and I don't want her to---won't you believe me? Won't you believe me? I'm telling you the God's truth' On my word of honor I am--

(Bus--Capt. looks at detective who smiles. Howard breaks down.)

They won't believe me -- they won't believe me----they won't believe me.

Capt C

The motive is clear -- he came for money---was refused-- there was a quarrel and he did the trick---Howard Jeffries- you shot Robert Underwood and you shot him with this pistol --

(Holds up pistol--light shines on it so that it attracts the eye -- Howard looks at it-- his eyes are rivetted on it until his face assumes a vacant stare. Scientifically this accomplishes the act of hypnotism and he comes under the influence of the will directing his will -- he is now completely receptive)

You committed this crime, Howard Jeffries --

(Howard Jeffries gazes at him with a fixed expression.)

It's as clear as daylight--eh Maloney?

(To Maloney.)

(Looks at Howard.)

You did it, Jeffries--come own up--let's have the truth-- you shot Robert Underwood---with this revolver---you did it and you can't deny it and you know youcan't deny it--speak--

Howard

(As if repeating a lesson.) I did it.

Capt C

(Signals detective Maloney to take notes. Maloney goes back of Howard--calls up policeman to hear.)

You shot Robert Underwood --
(Pause.)
Go on---out with it.

Howard

(Repeats.) I shot Robert Underwood.

Capt C

You quarreled --

Howard

We quarreled.

Capt C

You came here for money ---

Howard

I came here for money.

Captain C

He refused -- to give it to you?

Howard

He refused to give it to me.

Capt C

There was a quarrel --?

Howard

There was a quarrel.

Capt C

You followed him into that room --

Howard

Followed him into that room --

Capt C

And shot him --

Howard

And shot him --

(Enter Dr. Bernstein.)

Dr B

Well -- I---there isn't much smoke--must have been pretty close range.

Capt C

It's all right, doctor --we've got him to rights -
(To Howard.)
That's all---
(Bus--Howard sinks into chair -- his head drops as if he were falling asleep.)
(Capt. Clinton, bus---looks at watch.)
By Gum, it's taken five hours to get it out of him --
(Bus---detective pulls up blind showing red glow of sunrise.)
(To officer.)
Is his wife still downstairs?
(Bus--officer nods.)
You can let her come in--she may know something -
(Bus--officer goes out D. L.)

Dr B

Not at all sure, Captain Clinton, that Underwood did not do this himself --

Capt C

Well I am -- this man has just confessed -
(Enter Annie Jeffries -- she is anxious and frightened -- she sees her husband- and looks anxiously at him.)

Officer

Sit there till you're wanted, please --
(Bus -- Annie sits up stage--listens intently watches closely.)

Dr B

Confessed, eh?
(Looks closely at Howard--sees that he is asleep.)

Capt C

Confessed -- in the presence of three witnesses---eh, Sergeant?
(To officer.)
You heard him too, did you Delaney?

Officer

Yes, Captain -

Capt C

It took us five hours to get him to own up --

Dr B

Five hours -- yes -- that's your method, Captain -
(Looks at Howard--shakes his head.)
I don't approve of these all night examinations (and third degree mental torture processes) when a man is nervous and frightened his brain gets sombenumbed at the end of two or three hours questioning on the same subject that he's liable to say anything or even believe anything-- of course you know, or you ought to know, Captain--that after a certain time the Law of Suggestion commences to operate and --

Capt C

(To Detective.) The Law of Suggestion.
(Laughs.)
You know doctor, them theories may make a hit with college students and amateur professors, but they don't go with us--You can't make a man say yes, when he wants to say no.

Dr B

You can make him say anything or believe anything or do anything if he is unable to resist your will.

Capt C

(Laughs.) Ah--what's the use? We've got him all right- (I tell you, Doctor) no newspaper can tell me that my precinct ain't cleaned up -- my record is a hundred convictions to one acquittal -- I catch 'em with the goods when I go after 'em --

Dr B

I know your reputation, Captain;--

Capt C

I'm after results---none of them Psyche theories for mine--
(To Officer.)
Did you 'phone to his father?

Officer

He's on his way down, Captain.

Capt C

All right. Hey Jeffries--wake up!
(Shakes him.)
Come on --stand up.
(Bus.)
Brace up now---take him over to the station--
(Aside to Detective Sergeant Maloney.)
Writemout the confession and get him to ~~sight~~ sign it--
before breakfast. I'll be right over.
(Bus--officer and detective fix his collar and tie, put his hat on, etc., bus---Doctor prepares to go.)
Is there an officer in there?

Dr B

Yes -- he'll stay till the coroner comes---I suppose--
well, I'll make out my report. Good-day.
(Exit D. L.)

Annie

(Stands up.) Howard--may I speak to him, sir?

Capt C

Not just now, please --

Howard

(Acts as if dazed.) Annie -- I---something has happened-
Underwood--I don't quite know --

Capt C

Get him over to the station--
(To Annie.)
You can see him over there later on/ Mrs. Jeffries, I'd
like to as you a few questions.
(Bus--they take Howard off. Annie says nothing, but shows her mental anguish. Exit officer--Howard and Detective D.L.)
Mrs. Jeffries, did you ever hear your husband threaten
Robert Underwood?

Annie

You've no right to ask me that question--

Capt C

You may help the authorities to -- to --

Annie

To convict my husband -- thank you---I understand my position.

Capt C

You can't do him very much harm. He confessed to the shooting.

Annie

I don't believe it --

Capt C

Of course not---didn't expect you to--
(Looks at her.)
Did you know Mr. Underwood?

Annie

Yes--he introduced me to my husband.

Capt C

Where?

Annie

New Haven, Connecticut.

Capt C

Up at the college, eh? Yes I remember the affair--I sent a man to New Haven to look up your record for his folks.

Annie

Well, you found nothing against me--did you?

Capt C

How long have you known Mr. Underwood?

Annie

I met him once or twice up in New Haven but I've never seen him since my marriage to Mr. Jeffries.

Capt C

Your husband and he were not very good friends after your marriage, eh?

Annie

Not very --

(Sees she has made a mistake.)

Capt C

Not very good friends, eh? In fact your husband didn't like him, did he?

Annie

He didn't like him well enough to run after him.

(Enter Detective Maloney D. L. Captain Clinton beckons to him--whispers to him and detective nods and exits D.L.)

Capt C

Was your husband jealous of Underwood?

Annie

Jealous.' What right have you to ask me that? No, he was not jealous---there was never any reason. I refuse to answer any more questions.

Capt C

Now you can help him, Mrs. Jeffries--by helping us-- did you call here last night to see Mr. Underwood?

Annie

No.

Capt C

Sure?

Annie

Positive.

Capt C

There was a woman called to see him last night -- and I thought perhaps--

(Enter Detective Maloney with a boy about 18 in the livery of an elevator attendant--the boy looks at Annie--pause.)

Capt C

Well---

Boy

(Shakes his head.) Don't think so---no sir---It's not the same lady---leastways I----no---

Capt C

Sure?

Boy

I----think----so---

Capt C

Do you remember the name she gave yet?

Boy

No sir. I've been trying to think of it ---ever since you asked me.

Annie

Well if you have no further use for me--I---I think I'll go---

Capt C

Just one moment Mrs. Jeffries --

Boy

That's it---that's it, sir, Jeffires---that was the name she gave ---leastways I think it was.

Annie

I was never here before in my life--

Boy

(Looks at her.) (Shakes his head.) No, she's not the one---I guess I'm mistaken sir---

Capt C

Sure?

Boy

Yes, sir--I---I'm-sure.

Capt C

That's all right. We'll find out--
(Boy exits followed by detective L.)
It will be rather a pity if it wasn't you who called on Underwood last night.

Annie

Indeed?

Capt C

Yes---a woman always gets the jury mixed up---
(Laughs.)
Nothin' rouses sympathy for the accused like a pretty face --Now if they quarrelled about you---your husband would stand some chance---you'd better tell me the truth Mrs. Jeffries--and I can advise who to go to--

Annie

Thanks---I'm going to the best lawyer I can get, not one of those court room politicians---recommended by a political police xx captain. I'm going to Richard Brewster -- he's the man--if my father had had him instead of a legal shark he'd never have been railroaded to jail and he'd be alive to-day.

Capt C

Oh, Brewster's a constitution lawyer---one of those international fellows -- he don't know anything ----

Annie

He's Howard's father's lawyer and he's the one I want.
(With determination.)
Howard's folks have got to come to the rescue---they've got to stand by him---they've got to ---
(Enter Detective Maloney with Howard

Jeffries, Sr. He is fine, aristocratic, gentle looking man--with birth and good breeding marked in every movement. Annie, instinctively recognizes him as the father of her husband although she has never met him. She retires up stage.)

Maloney

Captainm--this is Mr. Howard Jeffries,Senior. I've told him the facts --

Capt C

How do you do, sir?

Mr Jeffries

(Bus--in a dignified manner.) I hear that my---my son--has--
(Pause)
has confessed to the----the shooting--

Capt C

Yes sir -- it's a bad business -- he says he came here for money -- there was a quarrel--presumably about money, but I think it was over a woman anyway -- the shooting took place after --

Mr Jeffries

Please don't tell me the terrible details--I came here before I realized that I should not have come. The suddenness of the message caught me unawares -- the young man who has inherited my name has chosen his own path in life -- I am grieved to say his conduct at college -- his marriage has completely separated him from his family and--I have quite made up my mind that in no way or manner can we beoome identified with any steps he may take to escape the panalty of his mad act.

Capt C

Well, you're his father and I thought I'd let you know, sir,

Mr Jeffries

Yes;-I am his father and I suppose under the circumstances I ought to feel thankful to you, and I do---thank you very much---but--please do not mention the fact of my presence to any of the newspaper men downstairs--they may think that I am palliating or condoning--his conduct.

(Anniehhas been listening intently. She has made up her hind to speak to her father-in-law---she comes down stage.)

Annie

Mr. Jeffries---may I---speak--

Mr J

I beg your pardon---
(Turns with dignified attitude towards her.)

Annie

May -I -- speak to you?

Mr J

(Hesitatingly.) Certainly I---er---I---
(Looks at Capt. Clinton enquiringly.)

Capt C

It's the young woman who,married your --

Annie

(Cuts him short.) Thank you -- I prefer my first introduction to my father-in-law shall not come from the police-
I am your son's wife Mr. Jeffries--

Mr J

Madam I have no son -- and I don't recognize --
(Bus. Capt. Clinton.)
Please don't go Captain Clinton. I have nothing to say to this young woman -- nothing whatever--

Annie

But I want tomspeak to you sir--

Mr J

I repeat -- I cannot see you--

Annie

Mr. Jeffries--please don't refuse to hear me -- please -

Mr J

I do not think there is any subject whihh can be of mutual

interest---

Annie

Oh yes there is -- flesh and blood is of mutual interest and your son is yours whether you cast him off or not-- you've got to hear me -- I'm not asking anything for myself -- it's for him--your son--he's in trouble--

Mr J

Don't gor, Captain -- if this young woman insists on my listening to her whethernI am willing or not -- common courtesy demands that I accede to her request -- but I prefer the presence of a third person.

Annie

I only want to ask your sir -- not to desert your son at a moment like this--whatever he may have done to deserve your anger--don't--don't deal him such abblow -- you can't realize what it means at a critical moment like this.

(Tries to get him away from Capt. Clinton. When Clinton does not move she takes Mr. Jeffries down stage and whispers so that the Captain cannot hear her. He then has the decency to retire up stage.)

Even if you only pretend to be friendly with him -- you don't need to really be friends with him, but don't you see what the effect will be if you -- his father, publicly refuses his support--everybody will say the boy is no good -- he can't be any good or his father wouldn't go back on him -- they'll say--you know what the world is -- it will condemn him because you condemn him--they won't even give him a hearing--Oh don't, for God's sake--don't go back on him now --

Mr J

Of course you realize that you, above all others, are responsible for his present position.

Annie

(Amazed.) Responsible--wella-all right---I'm responsible-then punish me--but don't get back at him

Mr J

I could have forgiven him everything---everything but--
(Hesitates.)

Annie

Bat me ---I know it--don't you suppose I feel it too--and

don't you suppose it hurts --

Mr J

Forgive me for speaking plainly -- but his marriage with such a woman as you has made it impossible to even consider the question of reconciliation.

Annie

Such a woman as me? That's pretty plain---but you'll have to speak even more plainly--what do you mean when you say such a woman as me---what have I done?

(Pause -- he does not speak.)

I worked in a factory when I was nine years old, and I've earned my living ever since I was waiting table in a restaurant when I met your son---but there's nothing against me--nothing disgraceful I mean. I know I'm not educated--I'm not a lady in your sense of the word--but I've led a decent life. There ain't a breath of scandal against me --- not a breath, but--never mind me--I'm not asking for anything, what are you going to do for him? He must have the best lawyer that money will buy---not one of those bar-room orators. Mr. Brewster--your lawyer is the man--Howard spoke of him once--

Mr J

I repeat -- my son's marriage with the daughter of a man who died in prison --

Annie

That was hard luck---nothing but hard luck--you're not going to make me responsible for that, are you? Why, I was only eight years oldwhen that happened---could I have prevented it---well blame it on me if you want to--but don't hold it up against Howard--he didn't know it-when he married me--he never would have known it but for the detectives employed by you to dig up my family history--and the newspaper did the rest---God! They printed it in scare headlines---Howard Jeffries, Jr., marries the daughter of Billy Howard, the saloon-keeper who,died in convict stripes--that made fine news for the public-but it finished myncareer--killed my chances--

Mr J

(To himself in horror.) The daughter of a convict--

Annie

He was a good man at that. But he refused to pay police blackmail and he was railroaded to prison for hiding a friend who'd committed a crime. Captain Clinton there will tell you about it -- he knows how it was done because he helped to do it -- but it's forgotten now--

Mr J

Forgotten!

Annie

If my father's shingle had been up in Wall Street, and he'd made fifty rotten millions -- you'd forget it next morning and you'd send your motors to meet me and take me to your house in royal state and welcomed me when I got there--but he was unfortunate--unfortunate--won't you believe that, Mr. Jeffries---why Billy Howard's hand was always in his pocket. He'd give away the last dollar he had to a friend. I wish to God he was alive now---I wouldn't have to make this fight alone ---I wouldn't have to ask you to help us.

(Capt. Clinton bus. enter Detective Maloney who calls him. Exit D. L.)

Mr J

You don't seem to understand that my son's actions have completely cut him off from his family -- it's as if he were dead -

Annie

I know--I know but--it seems so hard. He's such a good boy at heart, Mr. Jeffries, and he's been so good to me--he's educated me quite a bit since he married me--Ah, if you only knew how hard he's tried to work--I'm sure you'd change your opinion of him----lately of course he drank a little because he was disappointed in not getting anything to do, but he tried so hard---walked the streets night and day--once he even took a position on the elevated road, but he caughtcold--and had to give it up -- even then he wouldnt let me work--me--who's earned my own living ever since I was so high--that shows a good heart, doesn't it? You know, he's only a boy---that's all he is---a boy--

Mr J

Mr J

And youtook advantage of the fact and married him --

Annie

Yes -- I know it---I did wrong--I own up--I did wrong -- but I--I--I love him Mr. Jeffries--believe me or not--I love him, it's my only excuse ---he was going the pace when I first met him and I thought I could take care,of him--he needed someone and--he's too easily influenced--his mind is not as strong as it should be--he told me some fellow at college used to --

(Pause.)

will him to do things-- hypnotize him, that's the word;--make him do stunts to amuse the other boys and he's never been the same since. Well, I--I just loved him because I felt sorry for him, I was strong and I thought I could protect him--but now this has happened--and I can't protect him ---it's too much for me---I can't fight this battle alone---won't you help me Mr. Jeffries? Won't you help me?

Mr J

(Pause.) Will you consent to a divorce if I agree to help him?

(They look at each other.)

Annie

A divorce -- why -- yes--if it will be any help to him--

(Firmly.)

Yes -- anything.

Mr J

You will leave this country and go abroad and live?

Annie

But I love this country - I can earn my living here--and--I'd like to live here---if you don't mind --

Mr J

You will leave America -- and you will never return--is that understood?

Annie

Yes sir--

Mr J

You will receive a yearly allowance through my lawyer.

Annie

Thanks, I don't need any. I'm used to earning my own allowance.

Mr J

That's as you please--you will not see him again--

Annie

Yes, but I---I'd like to see him once---just once.

Mr J

I don't want the papers filled with sensational articles about the touching interview between Howard Jeffries, Junior and his---his wife, with your picture on the front page --

Annie

Not even to---say good-bye?

Mr J

Not even to say good-bye.

Annie

He'll think I've deserted him---well, so much the better--
(Pause -- bus.)
And now--what are you going to do for him?

Mr J

I don't know--I shall consider the matter carefully--

Annie

Yes--but I want to know--I want to consider the matter carefully too.

Mr J

You?

Annie

Annie

Yes, sir -- I'm paying for it to some extent--with my-- with my---all I have--I want to know--just what you're going to give him for it?

Mr J

(Thinks.) I shall furnish the money for the employment of such legal talent, as may be necessary--- but it must not be known -- I cannot allow it to be known that I am supporting him--

Annie

Must not be known? You mean you won't stand by him---you'll only just pay for the lawyer?

Mr J

That is all I can promise -

Annie

Why, I--I could do that myself if I --- if I try hard enough --

Mr J

I can promise nothing more.

Annie

But I want you to come forward and publicly declare your belief in your son's innocence. I want you to put your arms around him and say to the world--my boy is innocent-- I know it--and I'm going to stand by him. And you won't do that---

(Pause.)

Mr J

It is impossible!

Annie

So his family must desert him and his wife must leave him except for some financially interested professional talkers, the poor boy must stand absolutely alone in the world and face a trial for his life--is that your idea? Well, it isn't mine, Mr. Jeffries--I won't consent to a divorce--I won't leave America--and I'll see him just as often as I can. As for his defense, I'll find someone--I'll go to Mr. Brewster myself and if he refuses--I'll go to someone else. There must be some good noble hearted lawyer

in this big city who'll take up his case. You needn't trouble yourself any more, Mr. Jeffries---we shan't need your help. Thank you very much for the interview--it was very kind of you to listen so patiently--good-morning sir.

C U R T A I N.

-:- A C T II -:-

A C T II.

SCENE: Law Office of Richard Brewster.

As curtain rises discovered Richard Brewster - a fine sample of old-school statesman - lawyer - of the Henry Clay type. He is talking to Jones law clerk, D. R.

Jones

She's here sir ...

Brewster

What, again?

Jones

Yes, sir.

Brewster

Well, tell her she must go ... No ... don't do that ... Tell her I can't see her - It's no use her waiting ...

Jones

I told her that, sir --

Brewster

Tell her I'm going over a case with a client, and ...

Jones

I told her that yesterday sir ... and she waited three hours.

Brewster

Well say it again -- We mustn't allow her to outdo us in patience ... er ... be as pleasant as you can Mr. Jones. She's in a very painful position and I don't want to hurt her feelings - but she mustn't dog my footsteps day after day ... she really mustn't.

Jones

I have already mentioned that sir, and she said that you were worth all the trouble she might take to get you.

Brewster

Well I'm not ... You can mention that - run me down. Tell her I'm an old fool .. Tell her anything you like, but for God's sake get rid of her .

(Enter Mrs. Howard Jeffries, Sr. Bus. Brewster rises)

Brewster

Oh - How do you do, Mrs. Jeffries --

(Bus. Jones places chair for her)

Mrs. Jeffries.

Good morning, Mr. Brewster -- They told me to come in. Is Mr. Jeffries here -

(Bus. Jones exit)

Brewster

Not yet - this is an unexpected pleasure. I think it's the first time you have ever graced my office with your presence.

Mrs. Jeffries

How quiet it is here -- I can scarcely believe I'm in the heart of the busy, crowded city -

(Sits)

These are dreadful times. Mr. Jeffries is frightfully upset.

Brewster

I judged so from his telephone message - last night - What has happened now?

Mrs. Jeffries

This woman is going on the stage --

Brewster

Hum!

Mrs. Jeffries

The name of Mrs. Howard Jeffries -- my name -- paraded before the public - At a time when everything should be done to keep it out of the papers - this woman is going to flaunt herself on the stage - What is she like -- When I asked Mr. Jeffries for a description he could only describe her as impertinent and impossible --- Is she as pretty as her picture in the papers?

(Business - Brewster)

You've seen her, of course.

Brewster

Seen her -- I've seen no one else -- for the last month. She comes every day - regularly. She literally compels me to see her and refuses to go till I've told her I can't see her and that I haven't changed my decision about taking her case --- Frankly, Mrs. Jeffries, if it were not for the fact that Mr. Jeffries has my promise that I will not take up this case - I should be tempted to - to -- consider the matter. In the first place, I like Howard - he was a wild boy, but he had many lovable qualities, and in the next place she --- she -

Mrs. Jeffries

She has aroused your sympathy.

Brewster

No - my curiosity ---She's a very peculiar girl - a creature of impulse - her position is a very painful one -- married only a few months - and - what is worse than all, she believes herself to be in some measure responsible for his misfortune - but the case itself interests me from a purely professional point of view - I mean apart from its personal interest - in spite of Howard's confession, I can't believe he committed that crime --

Mrs. Jeffries

Neither could I -- if he hadn't confessed - Do you know I'd like to do something for this girl. Will you give her some money, if I ---

Brewster

She won't take it --- I tried it --- She wants me to defend her husband -- I tried to bribe her to go to some other lawyer but it wouldn't work - queer isn't it -- she has a notion that I'm the only one who can successfully defend Howard....

Mrs. Jeffries

I think this girl ought to be made to realize how unhappy she is making us all - Mr. Jeffries suffers terribly - I can hear him pacing up and down the library till three or four in the morning - Poor man, he suffers so keenly and he won't let any one sympathize with him -- he won't let me mention his son's name - I feel we ought to do something -- try and persuade him to let me see this girl and -- and -- you are his friend as well as his legal adviser.

Brewster

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Brewster

Brewster

He is a very old friend, Mrs. Jeffries. I can't disregard his wishes entirely --

(Enter Jones ushering Howard Jeffries, Sr., D. R.)

Mr. Jeffries

(Bus. to Mrs. Jeffries. Bus - shake hands with Brewster) Brewster - what's that woman doing out there again - it's not the first time I've met her in this office.

Brewster

No - and I'm afraid it won't be the last.

Mrs. Jeffries

Is she out there -- now - ?

Mr. Jeffries

What right has she to come here? What's her object?

Brewster

The same as usual -

Mr. Jeffries

But you told her it was impossible.

Brewster

That makes no difference -- she comes just the same -- I've sent her away a dozen times -- What am I to do if she insists on coming? We can't have her arrested. She doesn't break the furniture or beat the office boy -- she simplysits and waits.

Mr. Jeffries

Have you told her - that I object to her coming here? -

Brewster

I have - and she has overruled your objection --- you know we can't use force -

Mr. Jeffries

Moral force - yes -

Brewster

What do you mean by moral force?

Brewster

He is a very old friend, Mr. Jeffries. I can't disregard his wishes entirely --
(Enter Jonas ushering Robert Jeffries, Sr., R. b

Mr. Jeffries

(Cus. to Mrs. Jeffries. Jim - shake hands with Brewster) Brew
after - what's that woman doing out there again - it's not the first time I've met her in this office.

Brewster

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Mr. Jeffries

Moral force - yes -

Brewster

What do you mean by moral force?

Mr' Jefferson

I - I - moral force is moral force -- per -- per - persuasion - I -- I -- Good God - I'm prostrated -
(Sits)

Mrs. Jeffries

Perhaps if I -- see her.

Mr. Jeffries

Not for worlds -- I can't submit you to -- to - contact with this impossible creature.

Brewster

Oh, come-- she's not as bad as all that.

Mrs. Jeffries

I'm sure she isn't - she must be amenable to reason -
(Sighs deeply)

Mr. Jeffries

Reason -- how can you expect reason from a woman who - hounds us -- dogs out footsteps - tries to compel us to - to take her up --

Brewster

I think you do her an injustice, Mr. Jeffries -- She comes every day in the hope that your feelings towards her husband have changed and also to give color to the general belief that his father's lawyers are championing his cuase. She was honest enough to tell me so. You know her movements are pretty well described by the papers and she takes good careto make them think she comes here to discuss hernhusband's defense with me.
(Lsughs)
She's a pretty bright girl -

Mr. Jeffries

Her movements are not described by the papers that I read - if they were I should refuse to read them - well - what can we do -- this woman is going on the stage to be exhibited all over the country and she proposes to use the family name.

Brewster

There8s nothing to prevent her --

Mr. Jeffries

I - I - meant force is moral force -- her -- her - persuasion -
I -- I -- good god - I'm breathless -
(Sits)

Mrs. Jeffries

Perhaps if I -- see her.

Mr. Jeffries

Not for worlds -- I can't submit you to -- to - contact with this impossible creature.

Brewster

Oh, come-- she's not as bad as all that.

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(Laughs)
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Brewster

There's nothing to prevent her --

Mr. Jeffries

There just be - Good God! - Brewster, surely you can obtain an injunction restraining her from using the family name -

Brewster

The family name is her name now -

Mr. Jeffries

You must do something - What do you advise -?

Brewster

I advise patience -

Mr. Jeffries

Mrs. Jeffries advised that ---- I advised it myself - anyone can advise patience - but that's not doing anything -
(Bang on table)
I want something done ---

Brewster

Hush --- don't lose your temper. I'll do what I can, but there is nothing to be done - on the lines that you are working - all I can do is to remain loyal to you though it goes against the grain for me to keep my hands off this case. I feel that you are wrong to --

Mr. Jeffries

I'm right - I'm right - Brewster - I'm right - and you know it, but you won't admit it.

Brewster

Well, I won't argue the matter with you - you refuse to be advised by me and -

Mr. Jeffries

What is your advice?

Brewster

You know what my feelings are.

Mr. Jeffries

And you know what mine are - I refuse to be engulfed in this wave of hysterical sympathy with criminals - I will not be

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Brewster

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Mr. Jeffries

And you know what mine are - I refuse to be engulfed in this wave of hysterical sympathy with criminals - I will not be

stamped with the same hall mark as the man who takes the life of his fellow being - though that man is my son - I will not set the seal of approval on crime - by defending it.

Brewster

Then sir, you must expect exactly what is happening - this girl- whatever she may be - is devoted to your son and she'll go to any extreme to help him - even to selling her name for money to pay for his defense - sell her name - why she'd sell her soul if she could get a decent price for it.

Mr. Jeffries

It's a matter of principle with me. Her devotion is not the question! Devotion - psh - the sentimentality of the case doesn't appeal to me -- my instructions are for you to get rid of her at any price.

Brewster

Except the price she asks -
(Shakes head)
You'll find that devotion is a very strong motive power, Mr. Jeffries and it will move in spite of the barriers we erect to stay its progress - that may sound like a platitude but it's never the less, a fact.

Mr. Jeffries

I will not endorse a self-confessed criminal --- Please let that be final -
(Pause)
And - you can do nothing to restraid her -

Brewster

Nothing -
(Pause - Bus)
You don't doubt my loyalty, do you?

Mr. Jeffries

No - no - Brewster -

Brewster

Right or wrong - my country - that is my client 'tis of thee - that's the painful part of the lawyer's profession Mrs. Jeffries - the - client's weakness is the lawyers strength - when men hate each other and rob each other we lawyers don't pacify them - we dare not - we encourage them - we pit them against each other for profit - if we didn't - they'd go to some lawyer

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who did - when a man wants to do the wrong thing - he's always willing to pay a good price to the man who advises him to do it.

Mrs. Jeffries

Yes - I'm afraid we all love to be advised to do what we want to do -

Mr. Jeffries

That may apply to the great generality of people - but not to me -

Brewster

Certainly not. Jeffries ...

Mr. Jeffries

(Prepares to go) Drop in and see me this evening. Mrs. Jeffries will be delighted if you'll come to dinner I'm sure.

Mrs. Jeffries

Yes -- indeed -

Mr. Jeffries

Well, good-bye -

(Bus)

You are sure a very liberal offer won't induce her to drop the name?

(Bus. - Brewster shakes his head)

Hum - we'll see what you cando. Are you coming, dear?

Mrs. Jeffries

Wait forme downstairs. I just want to speak a word to Mr. Brewster.

Mr. Jeffries

Very well --

Brewster

This door -

(Goes to D. L. F., opens it)

Mr. Jeffries

If there are any new developments let me know at once -

(Exit D. L. F.)

Mrs. Jeffries

Mrs. Jeffries

I must see that woman, Mr. Brewster. I think I can persuade her to change her course of action - in any case - I must see her - I must --
(Look at him)
You don't think it unadvisable do you --

Brewster

I think I'd better see her first. Suppose you come back in half an hour -- can you? --

Mrs. Jeffries

Yes --

Brewster

Very well, I'll - prepare her - That is, I'll -

Mrs. Jeffries

Thank you, Mr. Brewster - you're so kind - it needs a lot of patience to be a lawyer, doesn't it?

Brewster

It needs almost everything except conscience - In about half an hour then - Good morning -
(Busoness - Mrs. Jeffries exits D. L. F. Brewster thinks deeply - walks mechanically to desk rings bell, pause, enter Jones, D. R. Pause, Brewster still thinks)

Jones

Yes, sir.

Brewster

Eh - Oh - yes. Tell Mrs. Howard Jeffries, Junior, I wish to see her.

Jones

(Surprised) The - young --

Brewster

Yes.

Jones

Yes sir --

(Brewster shakes his head as if he didn't know what to do - looks at D. R., waits for her to enter. After a pausem enter Annie. She is obviously surprised)

Brewster

Come in -

(Annie comes down stage)

Sit down -

(Annie sits - Brewster looks at her - pause)

Mrs. Jeffries, I -- upon my word I - for the first time in my entire legal experience, I don't quite know what to say -

(Business)

How long do you intend to keep up this system of - of warfare - How long are you going to continue to force your way into this office?

Annie

I didn't force my way in -- I didn't expect to come in -- Mr. Jones said you wanted to see me.

Brewster

Yes --

(Pause & looks at her)

I want to tell you for the fiftieth time - I can do nothing for you -

Annie

Fifty -- is it fifty times -- you've toldme -- it doesn't seem that many -

Brewster

For the last time -- I can do nothing for you --

Annie

Not the last time, Mr. Brewster. I shall come again to-morrow -

Brewster

You will -

Annie

Yes, sir --

Brewster

You're determined.

Annie

Annie

Yes, sir -

Brewster

But I can't permit this to go on - I represent my client, Mr Howard Jeffries, Senior - and he won't donsent to my taking up your husband's case -

Annie

Can't you do it without his consent?

Brewster

I suppose I can, but I won't.

Annie

Well - you ought to --

Brewster

Indeed!

Annie

It's your duty to do it - your duty to his son and to me - to Mr. Jeffries himself - why he's so eaten up with family pride that he can't see the difference between right and wrong - you're his lawyer - it's your duty to put him right - Let me tell you It's downright wicked of you to refuse - Y You're hurting Howard. Why, when I was hunting around for a lawyer, one of them actually refused to take up the case because he said old Brewster must think Howard was guilty or he'd have taken it up himself - you and his father are putting the whole world against him and you don't know it.

Brewster

But I do know.

Annie

Then why doyou do it?

Brewster

I -

(Non-plussed)

that's not the question - -

Annie

It's my question -- and as you say I've asked it fifty times. and I'll ask it fifty times more ... I'll ask until you answer it.

Brewster

You're going on the stage?

Annie

I shouldn't be at all surprised ... I've had a very big offer.

Brewster

Well, I'll give you twice as much if you refuse it -

Annie

You mean my father-in-law will give it. You know it's no use you're asking me tomconcede anything unless you agree to defend Howard.

Brewster

I can't -

Annie

Then neither can I -

Brewster

You're determined to have me -

Annie

Yes.

Brewster

Now you're nearly as obstinate as your father-in-law.

(Bus)

Did you know I don't argue criminal cases -

Annie

That's just it - my husband is not a criminal - he is innocent. I don't want a lawyer who is always defending criminals - I want one who defends a man because he isn't a criminal.

Annie

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Brewster

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Annie

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Brewster

But there are other lawyers.

Annie

There's only one Mr. Brewster - and he's the greatest lawyer in the world - and he's going to help us - he's going to save Howard's life --

Brewster

You always say that - upon my word, I shall begin to believe it soon.
-

Annie

And I shall say it again - and again - every time I see you -

Brewster

And how often do you intend that shall be -

Annie

Every day --- I shall say it and think it until --- until --- it comes true.

Brewster

You mean you intend to keep at me until I give way - through sheer exhaustion -

Annie

That's it exactly.

Brewster

(Angrily) Young woman -- you -- you --
(Hesitates)
You know-- you've got me in a corner and you're going to keep me there -- I can see that ... you ...
(Stop. Then helplessly)
Damn it.

Annie

I quite agree with you ... but what else can I do ...

Brewster

(Laughs) I don't know.
(Looks at her admiringly)
you -- you're a pretty brave girl.

Annie

No, I'm not - I'm an awful coward -- but I'm fighting for him -Howard Jeffries lifted me up when I was way down in the world - he gave me his name -- he gave me all he had -- he tried to make me a better woman - and I'm grateful -- grateful -- why even a dog has gratitude - even a dog will lick the hand that feeds him - Why should I hesitate to express my gratitude- that's all I'm doing - just paying him back - a bit of the debt I owe him - and I'm going to move heaven and earth to bring his father around to my way of thinking. I've got you already -

Brewster

Got me? - already - What do you mean by that?

Annie

Why you'd say yes - in a minute if it wasn't for old Jeffries-

Brewster

You think so -

Annie

I'm sure of it -- you're afraid of him.

Brewster

Afraid of him?
(Laughs)

Annie

T'ain't so funny as it sounds -- you're afraid of opposing him --- I'm afraid of him myself -

Brewster

Then why do you oppose him in everything?

Annie

That's the only way I can get his attention - why, when he met me out there to-day he actually looked at me - for the first time in his life he recognized that he has a daughter-in-law he looked at me - and I'm not sure, but I think he wanted to bow to me - he's kinder beginning to sit up and take notice.

Brewster

And you think I'm afraid of him -
(Annoyed)

Annie

No, I'm not - I'm an awful coward -- but I'm fighting for him - Howard Jeffries lifted me up when I was way down in the world - he gave me his name -- he gave me all he had -- he tried to make me a better woman - and I'm grateful -- grateful -- why even a dog has gratitude - even a dog will lick the hand that feeds him - why should I hesitate to express my gratitude - that's all I'm doing - just paying him back - a bit of the debt I owe him - and I'm going to move heaven and earth to bring his father around to my way of thinking. I've got you already -

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Afraid of him!
(Laughs)

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Brewster

And you think I'm afraid of him -
(Annoyed)

Annie

I'm sure of it - you liked my husband - and you'd just love to rush in and fight for him - his father thinks he is guilty and well - you don't like to disobey him - it's very natural - he's an influential man - is a personal friend of the President and all that - you know on which side your bread is buttered and - oh, it's very natural - you're looking out for your own interests and --

Brewster

(Nettled) Circumstances are against Howard - your father judges him guilty from his own confession - it's the conclusion I'm compelled to come to myself - now - how do you propose to change that conclusion -

Annie

Don't have to change it -- you don't believe Howard guilty -

Brewster

I don't!

Annie

Not at the bottom of your heart - you knew Howard when he was a boy - and - you know he is as incapable of that crime asnyou are -

Brewster

Mrs. Jeffries - how do you know your husband didn't kill Robert Underwood -?

Annie

I know it.

Brewster

Yes - but how do you know it?

Annie

I know there's a God - but I can't tell you how I know it - I just know it - that's all - He didn't do it - I know he didn't.

Brewster

Ah - that's a very fair sample of feminine logic -

Annie

Annie

I'm sure of it - you liked my husband - and you'd just love to rush in and fight for him - his father thinks he is guilty, and well - you don't like to disobey him - it's very natural. he's an influential man - he's [illegible] friend of the president and all that - you know on which side your bread is buttered and - oh, it's very natural - you're looking out for your own interests and --

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Annie

Annie

What's the use of logic. When you know a thing, you know it, and it makes you happy.

Brewster

Feminine deduction --- think a thing -- believe it - and then you know it - it makes you happy.?. Well, the system has it's advantages.

(Looks at her sympathetically)

Haven't you any relatives to whom you can go?

Annie

No - my father died in -- up at --- in Sing Sing -- and the rest are not worth -

Brewster

I know --- I got Billy Howard's family history for Mr. Jeffries after your marriage - it's filed away among the family archives.

Annie

It's a wonder it don't burn 'em up -- my folks were not a very brilliant lot - but my father was all right at heart, Mr. Brewster - blood was thicker than water with him - He'd never have gone back on his own flesh and blood as Howard's father has done.

(Brewster looks at her steadily without speaking. She catches his eye - looks at him. After quite a pause he shakes his head)

Brewster

It's too bad. - I'm sorry for you, really I -

(Annie laughs)

Why do you laugh?

Annie

What's the use of crying - Ha! It's almost a joke - you're sorry - my father-in-law is sorry - and I suppose my mother-in-law is shedding tears for me too - you're all sorry - and you're all wearing crepe for us - but why don't some of you <u>do</u> something?

(Pause)

Well - you sent for me! What do you want to see me about Mr. Brewster?

Brewster

I want to tell you you mustn't come here again.

Annie

(Nods) Anything else?

Brewster

No - of course, you will be amply compensated.

Annie

Of course - Oh, well -
(Sighs)
This is not my lucky day.
(Rises)
They wouldn't let me in to the prison to see Howard to-day - Captain Clinton doesn't like me - He has always tried to prevent my seeing Howard - but I'll see him to-morrow - How is it that man has so much pull - so much political influence. How is it he is so rich -- why he's a bigger man in Albany than he is here... They do say he collects more money around election time than any man in New York. - but, Captain or no Captain, - millionaire or no millionaire - he can make up his mind that I'm going to see Howard to-morrow.

Brewster

Poor girl - you're having a hard time, aren't you?

Annie

Things have been better - Howard and I were very happy when we first -
(Chokes up - forces a laugh)
here I must keep off that subject --
(Laughs)

Brewster

Why do you laugh?

Annie

Well, - if I don't laugh - I'll cry - and as I don't want to cry - why - I just laugh. It's got to be one or the other - see -
(Laughs)
Well, I guess I'll go home - home -- that's the worst part of it - home - well - you have your own troubles - I'll see you to-morrow Mr. Brewster - Perhaps you'll have better news for me -

Brewster

I want to tell you you mustn't come here again.

Annie

(Nods) Anything else?

Brewster

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Of course - Oh, well -
(Sighs)
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(Chokes up - forces a laugh)
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(Laughs)

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(Laughs)
Well, I guess I'll go home - home -- that's the worst part of it - home - well - you have your own troubles - I'll see you to-morrow Mr. Brewster - perhaps you'll have better news for me -

Brewster

Sit down a moment - I want to ask you a question - how do you account for Howard's confessing to the shooting -

Annie

I don't account for it. He says he don't remember confessing, and I don't believe he did confess.

Brewster

But three witnesses -

Annie

Yes - Policemen -

Brewster

That makes no difference -- he made a confession and signed -

Annie

Against his will - I mean - he didn't know what he was doing, at the time: I've had a talk with the physician who was called in, Dr. Bernstein - he says that Captain Clinton uses hypnotic influence - that he can compel people to say what he wants them to say - well - Howard is - he's what they call a subject - they told him he did it tillhe believed he did.

(Looks at Brewster - he is tapping a table apparently paying no attention)

Oh, well ---

(Rises)

Sorry I don't interest you -

Brewster

(Brusquely) Sit still -

(She sits)

(Thoughtfully, not changing his position)

Who told you he was a subject?

Annie

Dr. Bernstein -- and he told me so himself. A friend of his at college used to make him cut all sorts of capers -

Brewster

A friend at college? Do you remember his name?

Annie

Howard knows it -

Brewster

Um!

(Writes on pad)

I'd like to see Dr. Bernstein.

Annie

I have his address @

Brewster

Write it down there -

(Business - she writes)

So you think I'm afraid of MrL Jeffries, do you?

Annie

Oh, no, not - really afraid - just ---

(Business)

scared - I didn't mean afraid - I meant ---

Brewster

Oh, yes, you did, and I want you to understand I'm not afraid of any living man - as to allowing my personal interests to interfere with my duty --

Annie

Oh, I didn't say that, did I -

Brewster

You said I knew on which side my bread was buttered - .

Annie

Did I?

Brewster

You say a great many things Mrs. Jeffries - of course I realize how deeply you feel, and I make excuses for you - but I'm not afraid - please understand that -- afraid --

Annie

Of course not -- if you were you wouldn't even see me - let alone talk to me - and - and -

(Business - points to paper)

Brewster

And what --

Annie

And - and - take the names and addresses of witnesses for th e defense - and - think up how you're going to help Howard - and - and all that -

Brewster

(Looks at her and laughs) So you think I'm going to help Howard?
(Annie nods)
You take too much for granted.

Annie

You're not afraid to help him - I know that - you just said so.

Brewster

And you're quite right -- I'm not afraid -- I'm going to take up the case -

Annie

Oh, Mr. Brewster --

Brewster

Now don't pretend to be surprised - you knew I would. You knew it when you came in at that door - my clerks knew it - everybody knew but me -- And please don't thank me , I hate to be thanked for doing what I want to do - and if I didn't want to do it - I wouldn't -

Annie

I'd like to say, thank you -

Brewster

Well, please don't.

Annie

May I say you're the dearest - kindest -

Brewster

No -

Annie

Most generous - noble hearted - courageous -

Annie

And - and - take the names and addresses of witnesses for the defense - and - think up how you're going to help Howard - and - and all that -

Brewster

(Looks at her and laughs) So you think I'm going to help Howa
(Annie nods)
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Annie

- most generous - noble hearted - courageous -

Brewster

(Bangs on table) Mrs. Jeffries -

Annie

Oh - Oh - how I'd love to have a good cry -
(To herself - saying "I knew he wasn't afraid, I knew he wasn't afraid; He!he!"She dances around laughs cries.)
Howard -- Howard --
(Enter Jones, D. R. with card - he gives same to Brewster)

Brewster

Mr. Jones - get a stenographic report of the case of the People against Howard Jeffries, Junior - get the coroner's inquest - the grand jury indictment - and get a copy of the Jeffries' confession - get everything - right away -

Jones

Yes, sir - do we - do we
(Looks at Annie)

Brewster

You know well enough we do -

Jones

Yes, sir -
(Looks at Annie and smiles)

Brewster

(Sees this) Ask her to come in -
(Business - Jones exit)
You see, he knew you were going to beat me at my own game.

Annie

Mr. Brewster - May I just say -- bless your dear old heart?

Brewster

(Cross) Certainly not -

Annie

(Wiping away a tear) Very well -- I won't -- but I'm thinking it just the same --

Brewster

Now I want you to be exceedingly nice to this lady -

Annie

Lady?

Brewster

Mrs. Howard Jeffries, Senior -

Annie

My mother-in-law - Oh good Lord!

Brewster

She wants to see you - Now please remember she is actuated by a genuine desire to be of some service to you -

Annie

P'r'aps so - but the door was slammed in my face when I called to see her -

Brewster

She probably knew nothing about it - inany case, please remember she is my client -

Annie

(Obediently) Yes, sir -- I'll remember -
(Enter Mrs. Jeffries, Sr.)

Brewster

Mrs. Jeffries may I present -- Mrs. Howard Jeffries, Junior.
(Business - they bow - Annie is slightly embarrassed. Mrs. Jeffries self possessed. Pause - there is a distinct pause - a very unpleasant silence)

Brewster

I told Mrs. Howard you wished to speak to her.
(Psuse)
I think perhaps I --- I'll leave you together -- pardon me -
(Bows - exit D. R.)
(Business - Annie folds her arms and waits obviously expecting an unpleasant time of it - prepared to fight if necessary)

Mrs. Jeffries

You

Mrs. Jeffries

You may think it rather strange that I have asked for this -- interview -- but -- Annie --- you don't mind my calling you Annie - do you?

Annie

I don't see why I should --- it's my name and - we're relatives - by marriage - relatives -- it seems funny, don't it - but we don't pick out our relations - and we must take 'em as they come ---

Mrs. Jeffries

(Trying to be concilatory) As we are -- what we are Annie - let us try and make the best of it

Annie

Make the best of it -- God knows I'm willing - but I've had mighty little encouragement, Mrs. Jeffries - when I called to see you to beg you to use your influence with Mr. Jeffries to help us - not at home was handed to me by a liveried footman and - the door was slammed in my face - ten minutes later you walked out to your carriage and was driven away.

Mrs. Jeffries

I knew nothing of this - please believe me --

Annie

It's what I got just the same - but I'm not complaining understand -- I'm not complaining, only I did think that at such a time one woman might have held out a helping hand - to another

Mrs/ Jeffries

How could I - now be reasonable - you are held responsible for Howard's present position ---

Annie

Yes -- by the Police -- and by a couple of yellow journals - I didn't think you'd believe all the gossip and scandal that's been printed about me --- I didn't believe what was said about you.

Jeffries

What do you mean? What was said about me ---

Annie

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Jeffries

What do you mean! What was said about me ---

Annie

Annie

Well - it has been said that you married old Jeffries for his money and his social position ---

Mrs. Jeffries

Old Jeffries -- have you no respect for your husband's father?

Annie

Not a particle - and I never will have till he acts like a father -- I only had one interview with him and it finished him with me for all time -- he ain't a father -- he's a fish -

Mrs. Jeffries

(In horror) A fish?

Annie

With icicles on the side --

Mrs. Jeffries

But surely you respect his position - his ---

Annie

No, ma'am -- I respect a man because he behaves like a man -- not because - he lives in a marble palace on Fifth Avenue.

Mrs. Jeffries

But surely you realize that when you married Howard you - to say the least - you made a mistake.

Annie

Yes -- that part of it has been made pretty plain -- it was a mistake --- his mistake -- my mistake -- but now it's done and it can't be undone. I don't see why you can't take it as it is and - and --

(Stops)

Mrs. Jeffries

And welcome you - into --- into our --

Annie

Welcome me --- me -- no, ma'am - I'm not welcome -- and nothing you or your set could say would ever make me believe that I was welcome -- all I ask is that Howard's father do his duty by his son.

Annie

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(Stops)

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Mrs.Jeffries

I do not think -- pardon my saying so -- that you are quite in a position to judge of what constitutes Mr. Jeffries' duty to his son -

Annie

Perhaps not -- I only know what I would do -- what my father would have done - what anyone would do if they had a spark of humanity in them - but they do say that three generations of society life and red blood turns into blue --

Mrs. Jeffries

Howard acknowledged his guilt - any sacrifices we may make will be thrown away.

Annie

Well, what are we to do -- stop every effort to save him because things look a bit black for him - ha - I wasn't brought up that way - no, ma'am - I'm going to make a fight -

Mrs. Jeffries

It's useless.

Annie

Mr. Brewster doesn't think so -

Mrs. Jeffries

You mean that Mr. Brewster has encouraged you to -- to --

Annie

He's done more than encouraged me, God bless him, he's goingto take up the case -

Mrs. Jeffries

Without consulting Mr. Jeffries?
(Business shows much agitation)

Annie

He's consulted his own feelings - he believes in Howard -- and he's going to defend him -

Mrs. Jeffries

(Anxiously) The papers say thate was a quarrel about you - that you and Mr. Underwood were too - too friendly - they implied

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(Mrs. shows much agitation)

Annie

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Mrs. Jeffries

(Anxiously) The papers say there was a quarrel about you - that you and Mr. Underwood were too - too friendly - they implied

that Howard was jealous - is this true?

Annie

It's all talk - scandal - lies - not a word of truth in it -- Howard never had a jealous thought of me -- and as for me - why - I worshipped the ground he walked on - didn't he sacrifice everything for me - didn't he give you and his father upup - didn't he marry me - didn't he try to educate and make a lady of me and bring me up to his level - My God - do you suppose I'd give a man like that cause for jealousy -- what do they think I am -what do the papers care -- they print things that cut into a woman's heart without giving it a thought - without knowing or caring whether it's true or not - as long as it interests and amuses their readers - You - you don't believe I'm the cause of his misfortunes -- do you?

Mrs. Jeffries

No -- I don't --- Annie -- believe,me, I don't -- you were right when you said that at such a time as this one woman should stand by another -- and I'm going to stand by you -- let me be your friend - let me help you

(Holdsout her hand)

Will you-?

Annie

(Takes her hand - she is much affected) It's the first kind word --- I've had from his side ofthe family and I --

(Looks at Mrs. Jeffries)

It's a queer thing, Mrs. Jeffries - and it keeps coming into my mind -- but -- Howard told me that while he was at Underwood's that night he thought he heard your voice - it must have been a dream, of course -- but he thought he was awake - your voice - That's queer, isn't it? - What's the matter?

Mrs. Jeffries

Nothing - nothing.

Annie

(Looks at her sympathetically) I haven't said anything -- anything -- wrong have I --- if I have, I'm sorry - awful sorry - I'm afraid -- I -- I've been very rude - and You've been so kind. -

Mrs. Jeffries

No. You've said nothing, done nothing -- you've had a great deal to bear - Annie -- a great deal to bear --

(Business - takes Annie's hand)

Tell me -- what do they say about the woman who went to see

that Howard was jealous - is this true?

Annie

It's all talk - scandal - lies - not a word of truth in it -- Howard never had a jealous thought of me -- and as for me - why - I worshipped the ground he walked on - didn't he sacrifice everything for me - didn't he give you and his father up - didn't he marry me - didn't he try to educate and make a lady of me and bring me up to his level - by God - do you suppose I'd give a man like that cause for jealousy -- what do they think I am -what do the papers care -- they print things that cut into a woman's heart without giving it a thought - without knowing or caring whether it's true or not - as long as it interests and amuses their readers - You - you don't believe I'm the cause of his misfortunes -- do you?

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(holds out her hand)

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(Rustness - takes Annie's hand)

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Robert Underwood the night of the --- the tragedy -

Annie

The Police can't find her -- but -- Mr. Brewster will - Captain Clinton accused me of being the dady -- he doesn't like me -

Mrs. Jeffries

Suppoising she is found - what can she prove? What difference will it make -

Annie

If she didn't shoot Robert Underwood - she probably knows who did e-

Mrs. Jeffries

How can she know - Howard confessed that he did it himself - he confessed it - or no one would have believed it possible -

Annie

We - don't believe it, and we never did ...

Mrs. Jeffries

Then why did he confess -

Annie

He never confessed -- Mrs. Jeffries -- he never confessed - if he did -- he didn't know it -- They forced it out of him when he didn't know what he was saying.

Mrs. Jeffries

(Business) Annie, did he tell you that?

Annie

Yes. Dr. Bernstein says they forced it out of his tired brain. I made Howard go over every second of his life that night from the time he left me to the moment he was arrested there wasn't a harsh word between them - what's the matter-, you're as pale as death - you --

Mrs. Jeffries

Annie -- what am I to do -- what am I to do -- I believed Howard guilty as his father did - I - it was natural - his own confession - his own confession - every one believed it -- I - I had no reason to doubt it -- Underwood must have

Robert Underwood the night of the --- the tragedy -

Annie

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Captain Clinton accused me of being the lady -- he doesn't
like me -

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it -- I - I had no reason to doubt it -- Underwood must have

kept his word - and shot himself -

Annie

Kept his -- word - and -- shothimself.

Mrs. Jeffries

Yes.

Annie

(Looks at her) You knew Robert Underwood -- you -- Howard heard your voice -- talking to him - Oh, Mrs. Jeffries -- you're not -- you're not the woman who visited his apartment that night

Mrs. Jeffries

Yes -

Annie

Why didn't you come forward -?

Mrs. Jeffries

The disgrace --

Annie

Disgrace!

Mrs. Jeffries

Can't you realize what it means to be associated with such a crime -

Annie

Disgrace, what is disgrace when a human life is at stake ?

Mrs. Jeffries

But it seemed useless - a useless sacrifice - in the face of his confession -

Annie

Yes -- I see -- I see -- but it must be done now -

Mrs. Jeffries

Yes -- it must be done now - Oh, if I'd only have done it before - if I'd only told Mr. Jeffries the whole truth. You speak of Howard's sufferings -- if he didn't do it, he has

Kept his word - and shot himself -

Annie

Kept his -- word - and -- shot himself.

Mrs. Jeffries

Yes.

Annie

(Looks at her) You knew Robert Underwood -- you -- Howard heard your voice -- talking to him -- Oh, Mrs. Jeffries -- you're not -- you're not the woman who visited his apartment that night

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Yes -- it must be done now - Oh, if I'd only have done it before - if I'd only told Mr. Jeffries the whole truth. You speak of Howard's sufferings -- if he didn't do it, he has

the consciousness of his own innocence but I - the constant fear of being found out is worse than any hell the imagination can conjure up - I dreaded it -- I dread it now -- it means disgrace - my husband must know - the wholeworld must know -

Annie

You - I can't believe it - even now -- the missing witness we've all been hunting for - how did it happen -

Mrs. Jeffries

Robert underwood and I were once partially engaged to be married, but I broke it off when I found out what kind of a man he was - I went there that night because he wrote me a letter in which he threatened to kill himself. I was afraid he meant it and I wanted to prevent him -- I didn't tell Mr. Jeffries I was going - and now when the truth comes out and I acknowledge that Ivisited this man - can you seewhat it means - what a scandal there'll be? The whole world will put an evil constructions on my action - they'll think the very worst -

Annie

Trust 'em for that -

Mrs. Jeffries

They'll say that I -- God knows what they'll say -- My husband will be dragged through the mire of another public scandal - his social prestige will -- Oh, I dare not think of it -- my duty is to that poor unfortunate boy and I mustn't think of myself --

Annie

Have you the letter that Mr. Underwood wrote you

Mrs. Jeffries

Yes - I've never been able to destroy it -- I don't know why - I kept it, but thank God I have it --

(Moaning to herself)

The disgrace -- the disgrace -- it's ruin -- degradation - it's the end of it all - Annie, it's the end of all --

Annie

I don't want to disgrace you - or ruin you -- but what am I to do -- tell me what am I to do?

Mrs. Jeffries

I don't know --

Annie

Howard must be saved.

Mrs. Jeffries

Yes --

Annie

Shall you tell Mr. Brewster - or shall I?

Mrs. Jeffries

(Starts) Mr. Brewster - why dhould he know?
(Bus)
I suppose he must know sooner or later but I --
(Business - breaks down and cries)

Annie

It's tough - isn't it -

Mrs. Jeffries

Yes -- it's -- it's "tough" - don't say anything now - give me a few hours - then I can think what is best to be done -- I'll meet you at Mr. Brewster's house to-night --

Annie

Tonight --
(Enter Brewster D. R.)

Mrs. Jeffries

Yes -- I'll go up and see my mother -- and then -- tonight -
(Goes up to window when Mr. Brewster enters. Annie nods)

Brewster

(He speaks to Mrs. Jeffries, Sr.) Pardon me, Mrs. Jeffries - I hope I haven't kept you waiting -
(Business - seens she is overcome - turns to Annie)
I've been talking to Dr. Bernstein over the 'phone --

Annie

(Bus. Brewster) I have told Mrs. Jeffries - that you have

undertaken Howard's defense ---

Brewster

Yes, I've been quite busy since I saw you -- I've asked Captain Clinton for an interview and he and Dr. Bernstein are coming to see me - tonight - and I have put one of the very best detectives we have on the trail of the woman who visited Underwood that night, Mrs. Jeffries - I don't think the police have been trying very hard to find her -- they're satisfied with Howard's confession, but we'll get her -

Mrs. Jeffries

Yes.

(Enter Jones ushering in Howard Jeffries, Sr)

Jones

I told Mr. Jeffries that Mrs. Jeffries was here

Brewster

Yes --

(To Jones)

you might have told him there are two Mrs. Jeffries here ---

(Business of Jones exit)

Mr. Jeffries

(To Mrs. Jeffries) I regret, my dear, that you should be submitted to these family annoyances -

Brewster

Mr. Jeffries - I have decided to undertake Mr. Howard's defense -

Mr. Jeffries

Indeed -- then you will please consider our business relations to have ceased from this moment -

Brewster

As you please -

Mr. Jeffries

Mrs. Jeffries -

(Offers his arm - indicates door. Business - Mrs. Jeffries looks at Annie - Annie nods reassuringly to her - as if to give her hope. Brewster rises - goes to D. L.E., opens it)

Pray don't trouble -- Good morning, sir --

Brewster

Good morning, Mr. Jeffries -

Mrs. Jeffries

Good-bye.

(To Annie)

Tonight -

(Nods kindly to Annie. Exit Mr. and Mrs. Jeffries, Sr., D. L. F.)

Brewster

(Return to desk) Well - who's afraid now ...
(Business - sees that Annie is deep in thought)
Come, if you please, we'll go over that evidence - bit by bit
Come - come - wake up -- of what are you thinking?

Annie

I'm thinking that my father-in-law has a pretty hard road to travel.

-:- C U R T A I N -:-

-:- A C T III. -:-

"THE THIRD DEGREE"

ACT III

S C E N E : Library at RICHARD BREWSTER'S. As curtain rises-- discovered Dr. Bernstein and Brewster. Servant at door.

BREWSTER

(At door to Servant)

Ask him to come up--
(Business of Servant's exit D.L.;
To Dr. Bernstein)

It's Howard Jeffries' father-- I was afraid he wouldn't come.
(Comes down to D.R.)
I shall always be grateful for your promptness in responding to my request, and especially for this information.
(Business with paper)

Dr. Bernstein

Don't speak of it, Mr. Brewster. I am only too happy to do anything in my power to assist you in this matter-- I feel exactly as you do. I've read the boy's confession and I give you my professional word-- it's absurd and contradictory-- it reads like the involuntary elaboration of a suggestion put into his mind by someone interested in the case --it is a contradictory mixture of improbable and psychologically impossible occurences.

Dr. Bernstein

The law ought to recognize these scientific facts.

Brewster

The law doesn't recognize metaphysics, and I'm afraid it never will until our lawmakers study science as well as politics.

(Enter Howard Jeffries, Sr., D.L.)

I'm glad you have come, Mr. Jeffries-- very glad--er,

permit me to introduce Dr. Bernstein, Mr. Howard Jeffires-Senior.

(They bow)

Mr. Jeffries.

The matter is urgent, your message said--

Brewster

Yes-- sit down--

(indicating chair)

Sit down, Doctor--

(Business with cigars)

I expect Captain Clinton in a few minutes and--

(Pause)

the matter will be placed before you.

Mr. Jeffries.

The matter of-- of my son's--

Brewster

Exactly-- your presence is necessary and--

Mr. Jeffries

But I do not wish to be present-- you know that and yet you send for me---

Brewster

Mr. Jeffries-- it is absolutely necessary that you shall be present when I tell Captain Clinton that he has either wilfully or ignorantly forced your son to confess to having committed a crime of which I am persuaded he is absolutely innocent.

Mr. Jeffries

If I can be of service of course I--I am ontly too glad--but what can I say-- what can I do--

Brewster

Nothing--but the distinct moral effect of your presence is invaluable-- believe me-- I wouldn't have taken this step-- unless I was absolutely sure of my position-- I have been informed that Underwood committed suicide-- and to-night evidence confirming this statement is to be placed

in my hands. The woman who paid him that mysterious visit just before his death has promised to come here and tell us what she knows. Now if Captain Clinton can be got to admit the possibility of his being mistaken it means that your son will be free in a few days.

Mr. Jeffries

Who has given you this information?

Brewster

Howard's wife.

(Business-- Howard Jeffries, Sr. starts)

She knows who the woman is and has promised to bring her here tonight with the evidence of Underwood's suicide.

Mr. Jeffries

And you are depending on her--

Brewster

Why not? She has more at stake than any of us. She has worked day and night on this case. It was she who aroused Dr. Bernstein's interest and persuaded him to collect the evidence against Captain Clinton.

Mr. Jeffries

She is the cause of the whole miserable business-- this whole miserable business.

(Enter Servant D.L. with card which he hands to Brewster)

Brewster

Ask him up.

(Servant exit)

Mr. Jeffries

I think you put too much faith in that woman, -- but you'll find out-- you'll find out.

Brewster

Yes-- after all, that's our object, Mr. Jeffries-- to find out--

Mr. Jeffries

What is the name of this mysterious witness? If the police

haven't been able to find her, why should Howard's wife? There was a report that she herself was-- acquainted with Underwood-- or something--

(Pause; Business; Brewster looks angrily at Jeffries)

Did she tell you who it was?

Brewster

No, she will tell us tonight----

Mr. Jeffries

(Shakes his head violently)

You'll see--another flash in the pan--I don't like being mixed up in this matter-- It's disagreeable-- most disagreeable.

(Business)

Dr. Bernstein

Yes, sir, it is disagreeable-- but-- unfortunately-- it is life--

(Enter Captain Clinton D. L. followed by Detective Sergeant Maloney-- both in plain clothes)

Captain Clinton

Got your message, Mr. Brewster, and came as soon as I could-- Excuse my bringing the Sergeant with me-- Sit over there, Maloney--

(Business-- Maloney goes up stage and sits)

He keeps his eyes open and his mouth shut, so he won't interfere with anybody-- How do, Doctor--

Dr. Bernstein

(Bows-- business)

This is Mr. Jeffries, Senior--

Captain Clinton

Yes-- I know the gentleman-- How do, sir- -

Mr. Jeffries

How-do you do--

(Sighs deeply as if ashamed to meet Capt. Clinton)

Capt. Clinton

Now Mr. Brewster, explode your bomb-- but I warn you I've made up my mind--

Brewster

Well, I've made up my mind -- so at least we start even--

Capt. Clinton

Yes--

Brewster

As I stated in my letter, Captain Clinton-- I don't want to use your own methods in this matter--I don't want to spread reports about you-- or accuse you in the papers--that's why I asked you to come over and discuss the matter informally with me-- I want to give you a chance to change your attitude.

Capt. Clinton

Don't want any chance.

Brewster

You mean you don't want to change your attitude.

Capt. Clinton

That's about what I mean-- I suppose.--

Brewster

In other words you have found this-- this boy guilty and you refuse to consider evidence which may tend to prove otherwise.

Capt. Clinton

'Tain't my business to consider evidence-- it's up to the prosecuting attorney--

Brewster

It will be-- but at present it's up to you.

Capt. Clinton

Me?

Brewster

Yes-- you were instrumental in obtaining a confession from him-- I'm raising a question as to the truth of that confession.

Capt. Clinton

Are we going over all that-- what's the use-- a confession is a confession and that settles it-- I suppose the Doctor has been working his pet theory off on you and it's beginning to sprout.

Brewster

Yes, it's beginning to sprout, Captain.
(Business-- enter servant. He speaks to Mr. Brewster)
Tell her to wait until we are ready for her--
(Servant exit)

Capt. Clinton

Say, Mr. Brewster, you're a great constitutional lawyer-- the greatest in the country--and I take off my hat to you-- but I don't think criminal law is in your line.

Brewster

Well, I don't think it's constitutional to take a man's mind away from him and substitute your own, Capt. Clinton

Capt. Clinton

What do you mean?

Brewster

I mean that instead of bringing out of this man his own true thoughts of innocence- you have forced into his consciousness your own false thoughts of his guilt.

Capt Clinton

I don't follow you, Mr. Brewster-- better stick to International law-- the police court work is beneath you--

Brewster

Brewster

Perhaps--- Captain, will you answer a few questions?

Capt. Clinton

It all depends--

Brewster

If you don't I'll ask them through the medeum of your own weapon-- the press--only my press will not consist of the one or two yellow journals you inspire-- but the independent, dignified press of the United States.

Capt. Clinton.

Inspire? Mr. Brewster, I don't like the insinuation.

Brewster

I don't insinuate, Captain Clinton-- I accuse you of giving an untruthful version of this matter to two sensational newspapers in this city, and these two papers have tried this young man in their columns and found him guilty, thus prejudicing the whole community against him before he comes to trial--in no other country in the civilized world would this be tolerated but in a country overburdened with freedom.

Capt. Clinton

The early bird catches the worm-- they have live reporters who asked me for information and got it.

Brewster

You have so prejudiced the community against him that there is scarcely a man who doesn't believe him guilty. If this matter ever comes to trial how can we pick an

unprejudiced jury and added to this foul injustice you have branded this young man's wife with every stigma that can be put on womanhood-- you have hinted that she is the mysterious female who visited Underwood on that night of the shooting-- and openly suggested that she is the probable cause of the crime.

Captain Clinton

Well, it's up to you to prove I'm wrong.

Brewster

You have besmirched her character with stories of scandel. You have linked her name with that of Underwood. The whole country rings with falsities about her-- and in my opinion, Captain Clinton, your direct object is to destroy the value of any evidence she may give in her husband's favor--

Capt. Clinton

Why, I haven't said a word about her.
(Turns to Maloney)
have I?

Brewster

But these sensation mongers have, and you are the only source from which they could obtain the information.

Capt. Clinton

Whay-- what do I gain?

Brewster

Advertisement-- political capital-- these same papers speak of you as the greatest living chief-- the greatest public official-- oh you know the political value of that sort of thing as well as I do--

Capt. Clinton

I can't help what they say about me.

Brewster

They might add that you are also the richest man in the department--a millionaire on a salary of $3,000.-- but I won't go into that.

Capt. Clinton

I don't like all this, Mr. Brewster-- 'Tain't fair-- I ain't on trial--

(Looks around at Maloney)

Brewster

No-- more's the pity.

(Paude-- business with papers)

Captain, in the case of the people against Creedon-- after plying him with questions for six hours you obtained a confession from him--

Capt. Clinton

Yes-- he told me-- he set the place on fire.

Brewster

Exactly-- but it afterwards developed that he was never near the place--

Capt. Clinton

Well, he told me--

Brewster

Quite so-- he told you-- but it turned out that he was mistaken.

Capt. Clinton

Yes--

Brewster

In the case of the People against Bently--

Capt. Clinton

That was Bentley's own fault-- I didn't ask him-- he owned up himself.

(Business)

You were there, Maloney.

Brewster

But you believed him guilty?

Capt. Clinton

Yes.

You thought him guilty, and after a fourteen hour session you impressed this thought on his mind and he-- he confessed.

Capt.Clinton

I didn't impress anything-- I simply--

(Business-- turns to Maloney who acqueses)

Brewster

You just simply convinced him that he was guilty-- though as it turned out he was in prison at the time he was supposed to have committed the burglary

Capt Clinton

(Sullenly) It wasn't burglary--

Brewster

(Business wit papers)
Quite right, Captain-- my mistake-- it was homicide-- but it was an untrue confession.

Capt. Clinton

Yes--

Brewster
(Business with papers)
It was the same thing in the Callahan case-- in the case of the People against Tuthill-- and --Cosgrove-- Tuthill confessed and died in prison-- and Cosgrove afterwards ascknowledged that he and not Tuthill was the guilty man--

Captain Clinton

Well- mistakes sometimes happen--

Brewster

That is precisely the point of view we take in the matter-- now Captin, in the present case, on the night of the confession did you show young Mr. Jeffries the pistol with which he was supposed to have shot Robert Underwood?

Capt. Clinton

Yes-- I think I did-- disn't I, Maloney?
(Business Maloney)

Brewster

Your word is sufficient-- Did you hold it up?

Capt? Clinton

Think I did--

Brewster

Do you know if there was a light shining on it?

Capt. Clinton

Don't know-- might have been--

Brewster

(To Dr. Bernstein) Were there electric lights on the wall?

Dr. Bernstein

No. On a lamp above--

Capt. Clinton

What difference does that make?

Brewster

Quite a little-- the barrel of the revolver was bright-- shining steel--

(Business. Captain nods)

From the moment that Howard Jeffries' wyes rested on the shining steel barrel of that revolver he was no longer a conscious personality-- as he himself said to his wife-- "They say I did it-- and I knew I didn't, but after I looked at that shining pistol I don't know what I said or did-- everything became a blur and blank." Now I may tell you, Captain, that this condition fits in every detail the clinical experiences of nerve specialists and the medical experiences of the psychologists. After five hours constant cross-questioning while in a semidazed condition you impressed on him your own ideas-- you suggested to him what he should say-- you extracted from him not the thoughts that were in his consciousness but those that were in your own--is that the scientific fact, Doctor?

Dr. Bernstein

Yes.

Brewster

visual
The captivation of Howard Jeffries' attention makes the whole case complete and clear to the physician.

Capt. Clinton

Visual captivation is good!
(Laughs-- turns to Maloney)
What do you think of it Maloney?

Maloney

(Laughs) Fine!

Capt. Clinton

It's a new one, eh?

Brewster

It's a very old one, Captain Clinton-- but it's new to us-- we're barely on the threshold of the discovery-- it certainly explains these other cases, doesn't it?

Capt. Clinton

I don't know that it does-- I don't acknowledge--

Brewster

(Business)
Captain Clinton, whether you acknowledge it or not I can prove that you obtained these confessions by means of hypnotic suggestion-- and that is a greater crime against society that any the State punishes or pays you to prevent--

Capt. Clinton

(Laughs) I guess the boys up at Albany can deal with that question--

Brewster

The boys up at Albany know as little about the laws of psychology as you do. This matter will be dealt with at Washington.

Capt. Clinton

I didn't come here to hear about that-- You were going to produce the woman who called on Underwood the night of the murder-- that was what I came here for--not to hear my methods criticised. Where is she?

Brewster

one thing at a time, Captain. First I wanted to- show you that we know Howard Jeffries' confession is untrue and now we'll take up the other question.

(Rings bell)

This woman can prove that Robert Underwood committed suicide.

Capt. Clinton

She can, eh? Ha-- maybe she did it herself-- someone did it--

(Enter servant D L)

Brewster

Yes. Someone did it-- we agree there--

(To Servant)

Ask Mrs. Howard Jeffries, Jr? to come here.

Servant

Yes sir

(Exit D.R.)

Capt. Clinton

Is she the one-- ha-- that's easy.

Brewster

She has promised to produce the missing witness tonight

Capt. Clinton

She has, eh?

(Business X's to Maloney-- talks to him)

Mr. Jeffries

(He has been listening intently-- following every phase of the questioning with the greatest possible interest. He now rises and X's to Brewster)

Is it possible-- is it possible that Underwood did this himself? That the poor boy may have been innocent after all. Great God! What a surprise! I never dreamed of doubting his confession--Brewster, if this is true I owe

you a debt of gratitude-- You've done splendid work-- I'm--
I'm afraid I've been just a trifle unreasonable.

Brewster

Just a trifle-

Capt. Clinton

Hurry up.
(To Maloney)
You can telephone from the corner drug store.

Maloney

All right, Captain.

(Maloney exits quickly D.L.)

Dr. Bernstein

I must go, Mr. Brewster-- I have an appointment at the hospital

(Bows to Howard Jeffries, Sr.)

Brewster

Thank ypu very much, Doctor. Don't know what I should have done without you--

Mr. Jeffries

Thank you, sir-- I am greatly indebted to you--

(Business. Bernstein winks at Brewster)

Dr. Bernstein

Don't speak of it.
(X to door)
Good night, Captain--
(Business. Capt. doesn't answer- Dr. Bernstein laughs and exit D.L.)

Mr. Jeffries

I've no faith in this girl or her promises.

(Enter ANNIE D.R.)

Brewster

Mrs. Jeffries -

Annie

(Looks around-- pause)
May I speak to you alone, Mr. Brewster?

Brewster

Certainly.
(About to X to her)

Capt. Clinton

One moment-- if this is all open and above board, as you say it is, Mr. Brewster, I'd like to ask the young lady a few questions--

Brewster

Certainly--

Capt. Clinton

(To Annie)
You promised Mr. Brewster you'd produce the woman who called at Underwood's apartment the night of the-- of the shooting.
(Annie looks at Brewster)
The witness wants instructions, Mr. Brewster.

Brewster

You can be perfectly frank, Mrs. Jeffries-- we have no desire to conceal anything from Captain Clinton--

Annie.

Yes, I promised Mr. Brewster she'd come tonight--

Captain Clinton

Did she promise you?

Annie

Yes.

Capt. Clinton

Capt. Clinton.

Well- where is she?

Annie

She hasn't come yet-- but she will-- I'm sure-- I know she will--

Capt. Clinton

How did you come to find her?

Annie

That I-- I cannot say-- now--

(Looks at Jeffries Sr. then at Brewster)

Capt. Clinton

Decline to answer, eh? What's her name?

Annie

I--

(Pause)

Capt. Clinton

What's her name?

Annie

I cannot tell you.

Captain Clinton

Do you know it?

Annie

Yes.

Capt. Clinton

Know it, but you won't say-- hum!

Mr. Jeffries

But you must speak-- you know what it means-- do you realize that my son's life is at stake?

Annie

Yes-- and I'm glad to see that you're beginning to realize it too-- but I-- I can't tell you yet--

Brewster

I may say, Captain Clinton, that I myself have not succeeded in learning the name of this mysterious personage--

(To Annie)

I think you had better tell us-- I see no advantage in concealing it--

Annie

(After a pause)

She will tell you herself when she comes.

Mr. Jeffries.

Ha! I thought as much!

Capt. Clinton

Well, when she does come-- I think you may as well understand-- she will be taken to headquarters and held as a witness.

Brewster

Arrested!

Capt. Clinton

That's what I said, Mr. Brewster-- she's a material witness-- the most important one the State has-- and I don't intend that she shall get away.

Annie

Arrest her! Oh, Mr. Brewster--

Brewster

She is coming to my house of her own free will-- she has trusted to my honor--

Annie

Yes-- yes-- she trusts to your honor.

Capt. Clinton

Honor cuts mighty little ice in the matter, Mr. Brewster/ I shall hold her--

Brewster

I will not permit such a disgraceful proceeding.

Capt. Clinton

With all due respect, Mr. Brewster, you won't be consulted You have declared yourself counsel for the man who has been indicted for murder-- I didn't ask you to take me into your confidence-- you invited me here-- treated me to a lecture on pksychology for which I thank you vry much. But I don't feel that I need any further instructions. If this woman ever does get here-- the moment she leaves the house Maloney has instructions to arrest her, but I guess we needn't worry very much-- she has probably forgotten her appointment-- some people are very careless in that respect. Well, if it's all the same to you, I'll wait downstairs, Mr. Brewster-- Gentlemen-- see you later--

(Exit D.R.)

Mr. Jeffries

(To Brewster)

I told you what it would be-- a flash in the pan--

(Looks at Annie)

Brewster

(To Annie)

You are sure?

Annie

(Shakes her head sorrowfully)

Yes--I am sure-- but the disgrace of arrest--she'll feel it so-- oh Mr. Brewster, don't let them arrest her.

Brewster

Who is it?

Annie

(Looking at Howard Jeffries)

I can't tell you just now-- she'll be here soon--

Brewster

Tell me now--

Annie

Please-- please don't ask me--

Mr. Jeffries

(Angrily) As I told you, Mr. Brewster, her whole story is a fabrication trumped up for the purpose of - of - God knows what object she has in deceiving us, I don't - I only know that I warned you what I might expect - what you always may expect from people of her class.

Brewster

Will you go into my study a few moments, Mr. Jeffries -
(Aside to him)
Let me speak to her alone - I'll find out -

Mr. Jeffries

I am going home --- I have hada most painful evening -- most painful - let me know the result of your investigation as soon as possible --- Good night ---
(Bow to Annie. Goes to D. L.)
Don't disturb me to-night, Brewster --- tomorrow will do -
(Exit D. L.)

Annie

Don't disturb him -- ha -
(Shakes her head)
He's going to get all the disturbance that's coming to him.

Brewster

(Severely to her) Do you want me to lose all faith in you -

Annie

No - Mr. Brewster -

Brewster

Then tell me why you conceal - this woman's name.

Annie

Because I don't want to be the one to -mto - to expose her. She'll tell you herself -

Brewster

Yes, but in the meantime you - you are casting suspicion on yourself - your father-in-law fully believes that it was you, and Captain Clinton suspects -

Annie

Annie

The Captain suspects everybody -- it's his business to suspect-but -- as long as you don't think that I -- visited Underwood that night -

Brewster

Candidly -- I don't know what to think -- I want to think the very best of you, Annie - but you won't let me --

Annie

I suppose I'd better tell you and have done with it --- but I don't like it ---

(Enter servant D. L. with card which he hands to Brewster)

Servant

She wants to see you at once.

Brewster

To see me --- Are you sure she hasn't come for Mr. Jeffries?

Servant

No, sir - she was quite positive -

Annie

It's --- Mrs. Jeffries -?

Brewster

Yes -

Annie

Will you let me see her, Mr. Brewster --- I'll - I'll tell her who it is and she can tell you --- she's --- she's a woman and I'd rather -- Let me speak to her, please - please -

Brewster

(To servant) Ask Mrs. Jeffries to come up.

(Servant exit DL L.)

I see no objection to your speaking - to Mrs. Jeffries ---after all she is your husband's mother - but I am free to confess that I don't understand you - and I'm more than disappointed in your failure to keep your word - you promised definitely that you would bring this witness here - on the strength of which promise I made statements to Capt. Clinton that I have not been able to substantiate -- the whole story looks like an invention on our part --

Annie

It's not an invention - Ah, Mr. Brewster, just a little while longer --- you've been so kind - so patient -

Brewster

I believed you implicitly - you were so positive this woman would come forward -

Annie

She will - she will -- give me -- only -- a few minutes.

Brewster

(Looks at her) A few minutes -?
(Looks at her a moment - then shakes his head)
Well - it's infectious -- I believe you again.
(Enter Mrs. Jeffries, Sr.)

Brewster

Good evening, Mrs. Jeffries -

Mrs. Jeffries

Mr. Brewster -
(Shakes hands with him -- looks into his face - then at Annie inquiringly -- Annie shakes her head as much as to say he knows nothing)

Brewster

Mrs. Jeffries, Junior, wishes to speak to you -- I said I thought there'd be no objection if you don't mind -- May she?

Mrs. Jeffries

Yes --
(Business)
Yes -

Brewster

Your husband was here -

Mrs. Jeffries

My husband!'-++-
(Looks at Annie inquiringly - tries to force a smile)

Annie

It's not an invention - Ah, Mr. Brewster, just a little while longer --- you've been so kind - so patient -

Brewster

I believe you implicitly - you were so positive this work would come forward -

Annie

She will - she will -- give me -- only -- a few minutes.

Brewster

(Looks at her) A few minutes -?
(Looks at her a moment - then shakes his head)
Well - it's infectious -- I believe you again.
(Enter Mrs. Jeffries, Jr.)

Brewster

Good evening, Mrs. Jeffries -

Mrs. Jeffries

Mr. Brewster -
(Shakes hands with him -- looks into his face - then at Annie inquiringly -- Annie shakes her head as much as to say he knows nothing)

Brewster

Mrs. Jeffries, Junior, wishes to speak to you -- I said I thought there'd be no objection if you don't mind -- may she?

Mrs. Jeffries

Yes --
(Business)
Yes -

Brewster

Your husband was here -

Mrs. Jeffries

My husband!--
(Looks at Annie inquiringly - tries to force a smile)

Brewster

Yes -- He'll be glad to know you're here -- I'll phone to him.
(To Annie)
When you're ready, please send and --

Annie

Yes -- Mr. Brewster ---
(Exit Brewster D. R.)

Mrs. Jeffries

My husband was here ----

Annie

Yes ---

Mrs. Jeffries

You've told Mr. Brewster nothing

Annie

I couldn't! I tried to but I couldn't - it seems to hard - doesn't it? -
(Mrs. Jeffries laughs bitterly - Pause)
I was afraid you weren't coming -

Mrs. Jeffries

The train was late - I went up to Stamford to say good-bye to my mother -

Annie

To say good-bye?

Mrs. Jeffries

I have said good-bye to her -- I have said good-bye to everybody - to everything - to myself - I must give them all up.

Annie

Oh it isn't as bad as that surely -

Mrs. Jeffries

Oh, I've reckoned it all up -- it's loss -- a total loss -- nothing will be saved from the wreck -- husband - home - position good name - all will go - you'll see --- I shall be torn into little bits of shreds - they won't leave anything unsaid, but it's not that I care for so much - it's the injustice of it all - the injustice of the power of evil --- this man Under-

wood - never did a good action in all his life -- and not even after he is dead - he has the power to go on destroying - destroying -- destroying -

Annie

he was no good -

Mrs. Jeffries

When he sent me this letter -
(Business)
I remember now - I tried to think myself into his condition of mind - so that I dould decide whether he intended to keep his word and kill himself or not -- I tried to reason out just how he felt and how he thought --- now, I know --- how he felt -- poor, dead wretch -- it's hopeless - hopeless - dull graving desperation - I haven't even the ambition to defend myself - it(s Mr. Jeffries - who will suffer -

Annie

I wouldn't lose any sleep on his account -
(Pause Sympathetically)
Surely he won't believe -

Mrs. Jeffries

It isn't so muchwhat he believes himself - it's the thought of what he knows other people are thinking that will make him suffer - if the circumstances were only less disgraceful - a suicide's last letter to the woman he loved - they'll say I drove him to it -- they won't think of -- my share in his death -

Annie

Gee - it's tough - and the worst of it is they're going to arrest you ---

Mrs. Jeffries

Arrest me -- put me in prison --- Annie ---

Annie

That's what Captain Clinton says -- he was here - he's here now - with two men waiting for you downstairs - it isn't my fault - what could I do --- when I told Mr. Brewster - he sent for Capt. Clinton ---the Captain's afraid you'll run away or something -

Mrs. Jeffries

But he doesn't know- who I am -

wood - never did a good action in all his life -- and not even after he is dead - he has the power to go on destroying - destroying -- destroying -

Annie

he was no good -

Mrs. Jeffries

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(Business)
I remember now - I tried to think myself into his condition of mind - so that I could decide whether he intended to keep his word and kill himself or not -- I tried to reason out just how he felt and how he thought --- and, I know --- how he felt -- poor, dead wretch -- it's hopeless - hopeless - dull graving desperation - I haven't even the ambition to defend myself - it's Mr. Jeffries - who will suffer -

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(Pause Sympathetically)
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Mrs. Jeffries

But he doesn't know- who I am -

Annie

No -- I didn't tell them -- I said you'd tell 'em yourself - but they won't trust you when they know who you are - let's tell Mr. Brewster - he may think of a plan -- suppose you go awain untilm--- Oh, this is awful -- awful -- what are we to do- what are we to do -

(Looks at Mrs. Jeffries - sees that she is help less)

It stuns a person - don't it? You can't think when it comes like this - it's just the way I felt the morning they showed me Howard's confession.

Mrs. Jeffries

Prison -- prison --

Annie

Not for long -- you can get bail -- it's only a -- a - Mr. Brewster would get you out right away.

Mrs. Jeffries

Get me out - My God, I can't -- I can't - oh, that's too much I've done nothing - nothing - Look -

(Hands her letter)

You can see for yourself - the wretch wrote me - wrote me -- frightened me into such a state of mind that I hardly knew what I was doing - and I want to trynto prevent him - that's all - Annie that's all - but do you suppose that anyone will believe it -

(Breaks down - cries)

Annie

Hush -- don't - don't give way -- be brave --- it will save Howard and ---

(Business - tries to comfort her)

Let me see - the letter - gee - I'm crying myself -

(Business - reads)

Dear Mrs. Jeffries -- This is the last time I shall ever burden you with my presence or bore you with my letters - You have forbidden me to see you again - You have sentenced me to a living death - but as I prefer death shall not be partial - but full and complete oblivion I take this means of letting you know that unless you revoke your cruel sentence I will make an end of it all. I shall be found dead to-morrlw morning -- and you will know who is the real cause - Your devoted slave, Robert Underwood

(Pause - looks at her)

This is great for Howard - I'm glad you didn't destroy it - but what a wretch -- what a mean hound to say a thing like that --- Poor soul, of course, you went and begged him not to

Annie

No -- I didn't tell them -- I said you'd tell 'em yourself - but they won't trust you when they know who you are - let's tell Mr. Brewster - he may think of a plan -- suppose you go away until --- Oh, this is awful -- awful -- what are we to do - what are we to do -

(Looks at Mrs. Jeffries - sees that she is help-less)

It stuns a person - don't it? You can't think when it comes like this - it's just the way I felt the morning they showed me Howard's confession.

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Get me out - My God, I can't -- I can't - Oh, that's too much I've done nothing - nothing - look -

(Hands her letter)

You can see for yourself - the wretch wrote me - wrote me -- frightened me into such a state of mind that I hardly knew what I was doing - and I went to try to prevent him - that's all - Annie that's all - but do you suppose that anyone will believe it -

(Breaks down - cries)

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(Business - tries to comfort her)

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(Business - reads)

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(Pause - looks at her)

This is a great for Howard - I'm glad you didn't destroy it - but what a wretch -- what a mean thing to say a thing like that --- you poor soul, of course, you went and begged him not to

to do it -- I'd have gone myself - but I think I'd a broken my umbrella over his head, or something -- Gee, these kind of fellows breed trouble, don't they? Alive or dead, they breed trouble -

(Sighs)

what can we do?

Mrs/ Jeffries

(Bracing up) Howard must be cleared of course, and I must face it -- alone ---

Annie

Yes --- you'll be alone all right - Mr. Jeffries will do about as much for you as he did for his son. Just watch him.

Mrs. Jeffries

Annie!

Annie

(Annie sees that her words wound Mrs. Jeffries - changes her tone to one of sympathy. Looks at her sympathetically)

Honest to God I'm heart-broken -- I'd do anything to save you from this --- this public disgrace - I know what it means - I've had my dose of it --

(Business with letter)

but this has got to come out - hasn't it?

(Looks at letter closely)

Mrs. Jeffries

Yes - I realize that, but the disgrace of arrest -

(Frantically)

I can't - Annie I can't go to prison even if it's only for a moment -- give me that letter - I'll leave New York tonight- I'll go to Europe - send it from Paris -- you'll trust me to do that won't you? Give it to me Annie -

(Reaches outfor letter)

Please - please trust me --

Annie

No - No --

(Withholds letter)

I can't - how can I? Supposing you -- you --

Mrs. Jeffries

Please -- please do - You can tell them when I'm out of the country - don't ask me to make this sacrifice now - don't ask me -- don't -

Annie

You've lost your nerve now and you don't know what you're saying. Howard's life comes before you - me - everybpdy - you know that --

Mrs. Jeffries

Yes - Yes - I know that -- I'm - I'm only asking you to wait - I -- I ought to have left New York this morning - That's what I should have done - gone at once - now - it's too late - unless you help me -

Annie

I'll help you all I can, but -- I - I've promised Mr. Brewster to -to - clear the matter up tonight.

(Enter Captain Clinton and Detective Sergeant Maloney D. L. Pause - both women are afraid)

Capt. Clinton

I thought Mr. Brewster was here -

Annie

I'll send for him -

(Business, rings bell)

Capt. Clinton

Well - where's your mysterious witness?

(Looks curiously at Mrs. Jeffries, Sr.)

Annie

This is Mrs. Howard Jeffries, Senior - my husband's mother -

(Business - then hands Mrs. Jeffries letter - this action indicates that she will not expose Mrs. Jeffries - looks at her, then at letter - pause)

Capt. Clinton

(Impressed by the dignity and appearance of Mrs. Jeffries, Sr.) I beg your pardon Madam - I wanted to tell Mr. Brewster I was going -

(Enter Servant D. R.)

(Bus. of handing letter)

Annie

Please inform Mr. Brewster, Captain Clinton is going --

(Business - Servant X to D. L. and exit)

Capt. Clinton

Capt. Clinton

(Watches Annie - then laughs at her) Well - you might as well own up - you've played a trick on him -
(Laughs)
You've played a trick on all of us -

Annie

No Captain Clinton I told you the simple truth - and - naturally - you don't believe it -

Capt. Clinton

The simple truth may do for Mr. Brewster - but it won't do for me - I never expected this mysterious witness, who was going to prove that Underwood committed suicide to make an appearance did I, Malony - and why not? - because, begging your pardon for doubting your word, there's no such a person -

Annie

And begging your pardon for disputing your word Captain Clinton there is such a person.

Capt. Clinton

Then where is she?
(Annie business - pause - enter Brewster D.L.)
I'll tell you where she is - she's right here -- Annie Jeffries you're the woman who visited Underwood the night of his death - and I don't hesitate to say so - I've said it right alone - haven't I Maloney?

Annie

You certainly told the newspapers so -

Capt. Clinton

I've got your record at New Haven. I know all about you and your folks - youknew the men when they were at College - you knew Underwood before you knew young Jeffries - it was Underwood who introduced you to your husband - it was Underwood who aroused your husband's jealousy -- you went to his rooms that night - your husband followed you there - and the shooting took place - false confession, eh? Hypnotism, eh? I guess it's the International and Constitutional law for yours after this Mr. Brewster --

Annie

Is that so -

Brewster

(To Annie) Please say nothing!

Annie

No -I guess I'll let the captain talk - go on Captain--

Mrs. Jeffries

(Comes down stage) Annie - the truth must come out sooner or later - here sir -

Annie

No - no - not tonight.

Mrs. Jeffries

Yes now. Here sir -
(Business, place letter in Captain's hand - bus. he reads it)

Captain Clinton

Thank you Madam.
(Business, Mrs. Jeffries, Sr. sinks into chair - head on desk) (Reads)
Dear Mrs. Jeffries -
(Business)
From Robert Underwood - Dear Mrs. Jeffries -
(Looks at Annie)
Is that conclusive? What did I tell you? - I --
(Business - scans letter quickly)
Shall be found dead tomorrow - suicide eh? Why this - this is a forgery --
(Business, Brewster looks at letter quickly. Holds Captain arm)

Brewster

Permit me - thank you.
(Looks over letter)
If it's a forgery it will be a very simple matter for you to prove it -
(Business. To Mrs. Jeffries)
Is this the envelope? Thank you.
(Takes it from Mrs. Jeffries, Sr.)

Capt. Clinton

And now Mrs. Jeffries I'll trouble you to go with me to headquarters.
(Business - both women stand up as if ready to go)

Brewster

Mrs. Jeffries will not go with you - she has made no attempt to leave the state -

Capt. Clinton

She's wanted at Police Headquarters.

Brewster

She'll be there tomorrow morning -

Capt. Clinton

She'll be there tonight -
(Business - looks at Brewster who returns his gaze. Pause)
The moment she attempts to leave the house, I shall arrest her. Good night Mr. Brewster.
(Brewster bows)

Annie

Good night Captain Clinton -
(Smiles at him)

Capt. Clinton

I'll see you later - Come on Maloney.
(Exit Capt. Clinton and Maloney D.L.)

Annie

What a sweet amiable disposition -
(Brewster turns on Annie quickly, his manner has changed)

Brewster

You are not the woman to whom this letter was addressed -

Annie

No -- I --

Brewster

It is your intention to go on the witness stand and commit perjury is it?

Annie

I don't know, I -- I never thought of it --
(Repeat)

Commit perjury?

Brewster

(To Mrs. Jeffries, Sr) And is it your intention to allow her to do so?

Mrs. Jeffries

No - no -

Brewster

(Business with envelope) This letter is addressed to you - at your 59th Street residence and is intended for you --

Mrs. Jeffries

Yes -

Brewster

Then I repeat, is it your intention to perjure yourself -
(Business - Annie does not reply)
I assume that it is - but let me ask you - do you expect me, as your counsel, to become particeps criminis to this tissue of lies -- am I expected to build up a false structure for you to swear to? Am I?

Annie

I don't know - I haven't thought of it -
(Suddenly - as if the idea seemed good)
If it can be done - why not - why not - I'm glad you suggested it --

Brewster

I suggest it?

Annie

Yes - it never occurred to me till you spoke and now - everybody says I'm - I'm the woman who called on Robert Underwood that night -- well - that's all right - let them think so What difference does it make as long as Howard goes free?
(Turns to Go)
Good night, Mrs. Jeffries -

Brewster

Don't go - Captain Clinton's men are waiting outside -

Annie

Annie

That doesn't matter.

Brewster

But you must not go - they'll arrest you - Annie - you will please remain here.

Mrs. Jeffries

Annie ---

Annie

I wouldn't keep Captain Clinton waiting for the world -
(Bus. - Brewston)
Good night Mr. Brewster - and God bless you -

Brewster

Annie!

Annie
(Throws him a kiss and rushes off stage. - Mrs. Jeffries slips off her chair gently onto floor in a faint)

Brewster

Wall I'll be ---

-:- C U R T A I N -:-

Annie

That doesn't matter.

Brewster

But you must not go - they'll arrest you - Annie - you will please remain here.

Mrs. Jeffries

Annie ---

Annie

I wouldn't keep Captain Clinton waiting for the world -
(Bus. - Brewster)
Good night Mr. Brewster - and God bless you -

Brewster

Annie!

Annie
(Throws him a kiss and rushes off stage. - Mrs. Jeffries slips off her chair gently onto floor in a faint)

Brewster

Well I'll be ---

-:- CURTAIN -:-

-:- A C T I V -:-

-:- V I T O A -:-

ACT IV.

SCENE: Dining room in flat occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Howard Jeffries, Jr. It is a plain unpretentious $40.00 a month flat.

As curtain rises, Annie is preparing a meal. Detail and business of laying place for two - after placing materials on table she goes into the kitchen L. C. and brings out rolls, etc., placing same on table - every now and then she looks anxiously at D. L. and at end of business she goes to D. and listens - at this point - bell D R.

Annie

Come in.

(Business - the door shakes. Annie remembers that the door islocked, Xes quickly over to open it. Enter Dr. Bernstein)

Dr. Bernstein

Good morning Mrs. Jeffries.

(Business puts down medical bag)

Well, how is out patient?

Annie

All right, Doctor. He had a splendid night's rest. I'll call him.

Dr. Bernstein

Never mind - I want to talk to you - May I --

(Business)

(Pauses as if uncertain)

Mrs. Jeffries - your husband needs a change of scene - he's worrying -- that fainting speal last night was only a symptom. I'm afraid he'll break down - unless -- unless...

Annie

Unless - what?

(Business, jumps up - sound from kitchen)

Oh Lord! - the milk is boiling over.

(Rushes into kitchen - she remains out of sight a moment and then returns)

Excuse me --

(Sits)

So that's what's the matter --

Dr. Bernstein

Your husband is under a deep mental strain Mrs. Jeffries - his inability to support you - his inability to occupy his position in the social world is mental torture. He feels his disgrace keenly and there is nothing else to occupy his mind but the thoughtsx of utter and complete failure in life - I was talking to his father last night and --

Annie

And --

(Draws herself up)

Dr. Bernstein

Now don't regard me as an enemy because Me.Jeffries enquired after his son - believe me he's very anxious - he knows he did the boy a great injustice and he wants to make up for it.

Annie

How does he propose to do it?

Dr. Bernstein

(Looks at her - pause - business) Is there something bruning?

Annie

Oh good gracious. The bacon must be a cinder by this time.
(Business - rushes into kitchen then returns)
Excuse me - the frying pan was too near the fire - will you have some lunch with us?

Dr. Bernstein

(Shakes his head - pause - then business) Mrs. Jeffries - suppose your husband went abroad for a few months with his father and mother?

Annie

Is that the proposition?

Dr. Bernstein

I believe Mr. Jeffries has spoken to his son.

Annie

He wants to separate us - he'd give half his fortune to do it - and - perhaps he's not altogether wrong - things look pretty black for me don't they - Everybody believes that my going to see Underwood that night had something to do with his suicide

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Annie

And --

(Draws herself up)

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Annie

How does he propose to do it?

Dr. Bernstein

(looks at her - pause - business) Is there something burning?

Annie

Oh good gracious. The bacon must be a cinder by this time. (Business - rushes into kitchen then returns) Excuse me - the frying pan was too near the fire - will you have some lunch with us?

Dr. Bernstein

(Shakes his head - pause - thin business) Mrs. Jeffries I suppose your husband went abroad for a few months with his father and mother?

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and led to my husband being falsely accused. The police built up a fine romance between Mr. Underwood "and me - and the papers --- the limit.

(Business - throws up both hands)

Every other day a reporter comes and asks us when the divorce is going to take place - and who is going to institute the proceedings - Howard or me - if everybody would only mind their own business and let us alone he might forget --

(Business)

I don t mean you, Dr. Bernstein -youre my friend, you and Mr. Brewster settled Captain Clinton and that false confession. I mean people - outsiders - strangers - who don't know us and don't care whether we're alive or dead - those are the people I mean - they buy a one cent paper and they think that it gives them a right to pry into every little detail of our lives;

(Pause)

- and so you think he is under a mental strain - well I think so too -- I thought it was because of the letter that Mr. Underwood wrote me - but I guess it's this life - his old friends won't have anything to do with him and - he's lonely - well, I'll talk it over with Howard -

(Pause)

Seen Mr. Brewster lately?

Dr. Bernstein

Not since he sailed for Europe.

Annie

He's a fine man osn't he?

Dr. Bernstein

Yes -- indeed -- well, you see Howard and --

Annie

Did you promise his father you'd ask me?

Dr. Bernstein

No - not exactly --

Annie

Howard's a pretty good fellow to stand by me in the face of all that's being said about my character isn't he - and I'm not going to stand in his light DrL Bernstein _ even if it don't exactly make me the happiest woman in the world - but don't let it trickle into your mind that I'm doing it for his father'S Sake.

(Enter Howard D. L.)

Hello Howard - did you wake up? Dr. Bernstein didn't like to

and led to my husband being falsely accused. The police built up a fine romance between Mr. Underwood and me - and the papers --- the limit.

(Actress - throws up both hands)

Every other day a reporter comes and asks us when the divorce is going to take place - and who is going to institute the proceedings - Howard or me - if everybody would only mind their own business and let us alone he might forget --

(business)

I don't mean you, Dr. Bernstein -you're my friend, you and Mr. Brewster settled Captain Clinton and that false confession. I mean people - outsiders - strangers - who don't know us and don't care whether we're alive or dead - those are the people I mean - they buy a one cent paper and they think that it gives them a right to pry into every little detail of our lives;

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(Enter Howard D. L.)

Hello Howard - did you wake up? Dr. Bernstein didn't like to

disturb you - so we just talked - excuse me a moment -
(Goes into kitchen)

Howard

How do Doctor?

Dr. Bernstein

How do you feel?
(Business - takes his hand - feels pulse)

Howard

First rate - I'm all right --
(Looks at them in surprise)
What's all this anxiety about me?

Annie

(Brings in dishes) Howard mixes his meals, Doctor - he always eats his lunch for breakfast -
(Laughs)
Don't you?
(Business with table)

Howard

Hum - the smell of toast makes me hungry.

Annie

Well, it isn't toast - it's burnt bacon.
(To Doctor)
Are you sure you won't join us?
(Business - fixes Howard's chair - helps him to butter, etc., waits on him - like a servant)

Dr. Bernstein

No thanks -
(Laughs)
I'll drop in this evening - good bye, Mrs. Jeffries - good-bye Howard.

Howard

Good-bye -- good-bye.
(Business - Dr. Bernstein exits)
He's a good fellow - is Dr. Bernstein -

Annie

Yes -
(Pours out coffee - serving him)

Howard

He helped Brewster make a monkey of Captain Clinton all right. What did he want?

Annie

To see you.

Howard

About last night? Oh, that was nothing. Just a little spell. You're the one that needs tuning up. I heard you crying last night - you thought I was asleep - but I wasn't - I didn't say anything because - well - I felt kinder blue myself. (Sighs)

Annie

I was thinking over - thinking over what we've been through together - and I've been thinking over what they're saying about us -

Howard

Let them say what they like - why should we care as long as we're happy.

Annie

Yes - but - are we happy?

Howard

Of course we are.

Annie

(Looks at him tenderly) That's when you don't think of what you've lost, but sooner or later you'll ask yourself the question everybody seems to be asking --

Howard

What question?

Annie

Yesterday - the bell rang and a gentleman said he wanted to see you. I told him you were out and he said I'd do just as well - he handed me a card - on it was the name of the newspaper he represented.

Howard

Well?

Annie

He asked me - if it was true that proceedings for a divorce were about to be instituted - if so - when - and would I give him some information on the subject. I asked him who wanted the information and he said the readers of his paper - the people - I believe he said over a million of them - just think Howard, over a million people not counting your father - your friends and relations all anxiously waiting to know why you don't get rid of me - why you don't believe me to be as bad as they think I am -

Howard

Annie

Annie

That's the fact isn't it?

Howard

No.

Annie

I've made a hard fight to hold you Howard - but I'm going to give it up. I'm through - I'm through --

Howard

Annie old girl - I may be weak - I may be blind - but nobody on top of God's green earth can tell me that you're not the squarest, straightest little woman that ever lived. I don't care a damn what one million or eighty million think - Supposing you did get letters from Underwood - supposing you did go to his place and beg him not to kill himself - what of it - I don't believe what they say - because I can't believe it. I've tried and I can't - it isn't in me to think badly of you and that's all there is to it.

Annie

Howard, you're just splendid - and I feel proud of you,but you're only a boy and --
(Pause)
What of the future - the years to come
(Business - Howard's face falls)
Ah - you see - you've thought about it too - and you're trying to hide it from me - but you can't Howard - you can't - your father wants you to go abroad with the family -

Howard

Well?

Annie

He asked me - if it was true that proceedings for a divorce were about to be instituted - if so - when - and would I give him some information on the subject. I asked him who started the investigation and he said the readers of his paper - the people - I believe he said over a million of them - just think Howard, over a million people not counting your father - your friends and relations all anxiously waiting to know why you don't get rid of me - why you don't believe me to be as bad as they think I am -

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(Pause)

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(Business - Howard's face falls)

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Howard

Well?

Annie

Well - I think you'd better go -

Howard

Indeed --

Annie

He wants you to take your position in the world - the position you're entitled to take - the position that I'm preventing you from taking -

Howard

Yes - father has spoken to me about it - he wants to be friends now and do what he can for me -- and I - I admit I've promised to consider - but --

Annie

You're going to accept his offer Howard - you owe it to yourself - to your family - and --
(Laughd)
a million anxious readers --

Howard

Annie -- why do you work against yourself -- all the time. You know that I'd like to be friendly with my family and visit my relations, friends and all that - but you keep urging me on and urging me on - it isn't fair to yourslef.

Annie

Yes it is - I'm not working against myself Howard - I want you to be happy and you're not happy - you can't be happy under these conditions - now be honest with me -ccan you?
(pause)

Howard

Can you?

Annie

No - not unless you are? Whatever happiness I've had in life, I owe to you --- and God knows you've had nothing but trouble from me. I did wrong - wrong - wrong - to marry you and I'm willing to pay the penalty. I've evened matters up a bit with your family - not let me try and square up with you.

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Howard

What do you mean - evened matters up with my family?

Annie

Well - that's a little - just a little affair of my own - a little side issue. Come Howard - you must do what's best for yourself - and in doing that you'll do what's best for me ...

(Business)

You must.

(He yields)

I'm going to pack up your things and you can go just as soon as you've finished your breakfast.

Howard

(Bus. He pushes dishes away from him. Sighs) I have finished...

Annie

(Business. Forces a cheerful attitude) I'm sorry your last meal was a burnt one.

(Bus. clear away things on table. Pause. She strokes his hair)

Come -- it's all for the best.

Howard

Well -- p'r'aps -- you're right -

(Business lights a cigarette)

Maybe a little trip through Europe will do me good - kinda pull me together - so to speak .

Annie.

Of course it will -- you'll break down or something if you don't go .

Howard

And what are you going to do?

Annie

Oh I shall be all right -- I'll go and live in the country for a few months - I'm tired of the city.

Howard

So am I - this city anyhow - but I hate like the deuce to leave you alone --

Annie

A trip abroad is just what you need -why your face has brightened up already.

Howard

I wish you coudd go with me.

Annie

(Laughs) Your father's society doesn't make such a frantic appeal to me as you might think it does -- where is it - Paris or Switzerland?

Howard

(Gaily) London, Paris - Vienna - no I think I'll cut Vienna out - I'm a married man - I mustn't forget that -

Annie

(Laughs - look at him) Why, you've forgotten it already Howard - Ah, you're such a boy -- a little pleasure trip and all is forgotten.

Howard

Well - now - you said you wanted me to go - and forget -

Annie

And I do - Howard you've made me quite happy - yes you have.

Howard

You love me and yet you're happy because I'm going away - I don't follow that line of reasoning.

Annie

It isn't reason - it's what I feel -- I guess a man wants to have what he loves - and a woman is satisfied just to love - what she wants - anyway I'm glad -- I'm glad you're going - Go and -- tell your father.

Howard

I'll telephone him -
(Business, gets hat)

Annie

That's right - I'm glad it's settled --

Howard

Where's my cane - ah!

Annie

And while you're out get me some tea and --
(Pause - look at him a moment)
No - I shan't need it now.
(Turns away - braces up)
Don't be long will you?

Howard

Come right back - By George! I feel quite excited at the prospect - it's awfully good of you old girl to - to think of me - I don't think there are many women like you -

Annie

Now don't spoil me -
(Lifts up tray - about to go)

Howard

Wait till I kiss you good-bye.
(Takes tray from her - places it on table)
(He kisses her)
Good-bye - won't be long --
(Business, bangs door. As soon as Howard has gone she gives way and sits in seat, leans her head on table and sobs. Business - After a short while she laughs at herself - and picks up tray, takes it into kitchen - business the sound of rushing water is heard off as if a tap were running - then bell. Business - as soon as bell is heard, Annie starts and dries platter - there is a crash - she then proceeds to dry her eyes - goes to door L. - partly opens it)

Annie

Who's that?

Brewster

(Off Stage) Someone to see you Mrs. Jeffries.

Annie

(Partly closes door) Oh Mr. Brewster - just a second - just a half a second

(Closes door - Business rushes to glass, looks at herself. Goes to side board, seizes a serviette, puts some powdered sugar on it, hurriedly powders nose with it - Business and then goes to door, opens it. Enter Brewster - he looks at her a moment)

Annie

Come in Mr. Brewster - I'm so glad to see you.

Brewster

If you put a little more powder on that left eyelid I shan't see you've been crying -

Annie

(Laughs) I might have known I couldn't deceive you - I'm so glad to see you - won't you sit down?

Brewster

Your husband passed me on the stairs and didN't know me.
(Sits)

Annie

The passageway is so dark.

Brewster

Yes.

Annie

Where have you been?

Brewster

Mostly at sea. When does your husband leave you?

Annie

How do you know that --

Brewster

Hadn't been back in New York an hour when his father's lawyer asked me for all the evidence I had. They want to use it against you - the idea is that he shall go abroad with his father and that divorce proceedings will be begun during his absence.

Annie

Howard knows nothing about it.

Brewster

Sure?

Annie

Quite sure,

Brewster

But he is going away?

Annie

Yes - I want him to go - I am sending him away -

Brewster

Do you know they intend to make Robert Underwood the ground for the application for divorce and to use your own perjured testimony as a weapon against you - you see what a lie leads to - there's no end to it - and you are compelled to go on lying to support the original lie - and that's precisely where I intergene.

Annie

(Nods) I knew you were going to scold me -

Brewster

Scold you - No - it's myself I'm scolding - it's my fault - you did what you thought was right and I allowed you to do what I knew was wrong -

Annie

You made two miserable women happy - surely you're not sorry for that are you?

Brewster

I don't know - I try to excuse myself on those grounds but it won't work - I violated my oath as a lawyer - my integrity as a man - my honor - my - self respect - all upset - I've been a very unpleasant companion for myself lately.

Annie

I should say so if you made all that fuss about something that somebody else did - why should you do pennance for my sins -

Annie

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Brewster

I should have prevented it.

Annie

How? My affidavit was sworn to when you arrives at Police headquarters - You were too late Mr. Brewster - Captain Clinton said you didn't understand Police Court methods - those gentlemen get up very early -

Brewster

I should have gone before the grand jury and told them the truth.

Annie

And send me to prison - is that what's worrying you - that you didn't send me to prison?

Brewster

(Looks at Annie, laughs) No Annie - although you richly deserve it, but I'll have no more lies - and that's what brings me here this morning - the first move they make against you and I'll tell the whole truth -

Annie

I don't believe Howards father will dare to proceed without his consent.

Brewster

Howard's father is - a - a -
(Hesitates)

Annie

Won't you please say it?

Brewster

Yes - I will - he's an obstinate, self satisfied old martinet.

Annie

Is that all - I hoped you'd put it a little stronger - between you and me and the gate post - I'm as tired of the Jeffries family as they are of me. I - I love Howard -mbut he's unhappy away from them and I - well I - don't care what becomes of me as long as he's happy. If they do succeed in influencing him to bring a suit against me - I shan't defend it.

Brewster

Perhaps not - but I will - now see here - you came to me and pestered me with appeals for help until I took up your case - didn't you?

Annie

Idid indeed -

Brewster

Well -now I'm interested I'm going to see you through -

Annie

But I am through -

Brewster

No, you're not - your case is still on - now please don't try and argue with me - those people can go just so far - and no further - you thought it right to protect her good name didn't you -

Annie

Yes -

Brewster

Well I think it right to protect yours -

Annie

You know I think you're angry because Mr. Jeffries left you and went to another lawyer -

Brewster

Angry - angry - I ---
(Laughs)
'pon my soul, Annie - I think you're right - I'm so angry with old Jeffries I could - I could - almost --
(Business)

Annie

So could I - but what's the use?

Brewster

It's unjust - Annie - it's unrighteous -

it's impossible -

Annie

But I am to blame.

Brewster

You're too anxious to blame yourself -

Annie

Let me tell you something, Mr. Brewster - his father was right when he said I took advantage of him - I did. I saw that he was sentimental and self willed and - and all that and I started out to attract him from the very first. I was tired of the life I was living - the hard work and loniliness and I made up my mind to catch him if I could - and I did - I didn't think it was wrong then - but I do not - and there's something else - I'm older than he is - three years older and he thinks I'm three years younger and that he's protecting me from the world - protecting me -

(Laughs sadly)

Isn't that a joke? I told him my father was a clergyman - and that my family were highly religious - Oh I can't half remember what I did tell him - but -

(Shakes her head)

I deceived him about my age - and - and -

Brewster

Well - You're not the first woman who has done that - believe me - it's quite a popular form of feminine deception however - you'll look twenty-five when he's forty and that's an extenuating circumstances -

Annie

I took advantage of his ignorance of life Mr. Brewster - his inexperience, and I've made up my mind that I won't allow this one mistake to ruin his life - he's a boy - a mere boy - I'm a woman - not a simpering girl - I repeat it's my fault - and I'm going to give him another chance.

Brewster

He's twenty-five - and if boys of that age are not men - they never will be - upon my word - if I was twenty-five I'd let this divorce go through and marry you myself.

Annie

Oh Mr. Brewster -

it's impossible -

Annie

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(Laughs sadly)

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Annie

Oh Mr. Brewster -

Brewster

But I'm now - so we won't discuss it - now don't pretend to be pleased.

Annie

But I am pleased Mr. Brewster - whether you meant it or not - It was a nice thing to say -

Brewster

At this precise moment I can't say whether I meant it or not but you're not above telling unpleasant truths about yourself - and God knows that's rare enough in a woman - or a man either -

(Enter Howard D. R. He opens door with key - Yale lock)

Howard

Mr. Brewster - well -

Brewster

How do you do young man - hum - you look very pleased with yourself.

Howard

This is the first opportunity I've had to thank you for your-your - kindness -

Brewster

You can thank your wife my boy. So you're going abroad - eh?

Howard

Yes - did Annie tell you?

(Brewster nods)

It's only for a few months.

Brewster

Only for a few months eh?

Howard

I've just told father -over the phone - that I'd made up my mind to go -

Brewster

Well - I don't approve of it -

(Business - Howard)

Don't interrupt me, young man -- I don't approve of it - and you oan tell your father I said so --

(Bell)

Annie

Mr. Brewster - please --

(Annie goes to door R., opens it. Enter Mrs. Howard Jeffries, Sr.)

Mrs. Jeffries -- come in --mHoward is here.

Mrs. Jeffries

Annie -

(Business)

Mr. Brewster -- this is an unexpected pleasure -

(Business - shakes hands with Mr. Brewster)

Howard -

Howard

Mother --

Mrs. Jeffries

I want to see you, Annie - I thought perhaps you'd be alone and-

Brewster

Nothing easier -- I want to talk to you young man -- what roo is that?

(Points up stage)

Annie

The kitchen.

Brewster

And that

(Points D.L.2.)

Howard

My room -

Brewster

That'll do -

(To Annie)

Will you excuse us a few minutes -

Annie

Certainly -

Brewster

(Takes Howard's arm) Come on --

Howard

Yes, but -

Brewster

If you'll kindly permit me - I'll do the talking - Come alone.
(Exit D. L., followed by Howard D. L.)

Mrs. Jeffries

Annie -- I've known for some time that Mr. Jeffries has been trying tombring about a separation between you and Howard - but I have only just learned that he is going with us and that divorce proceedings are to be commenced -- the moment we leave New York -

Annie

(Looking out into space) So Mr. Brewster told me --

Mrs. Jeffries

You know of course that I - that I - am opposed to Mr. Jeffries actions.

Annie

I know --- please don't worry about me -- I'm all right --

Mrs. Jeffries

I begged Mr. Jeffries to - not to go on with this suit, but he is determined, and when he gets Howard away with him - he will influence him - to sign the necessary papers and -

Annie

I don't think so!

Mrs. Jeffries

Ah, you don't know Mr. Jeffries

Annie

I've a pretty good idea of him -

Annie

Certainly -

Brewster

(Takes Howard's arm) Come on --

Howard

Yes, but -

Brewster

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(Exit L. L., followed by Howard L. L.)

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Annie

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Mrs. Jeffries

If he makes up his mind - he'll do it -- in any case - my object in coming here is to tell you that -- I have informed him of My disapproval of his action - that I am not going away with him -- that I am going to ask you to --

(Pause)

Annie, I have tried to express my gratitude to you for what you have done for me - and you would never allow me -- but now you must - I have come to offer you a home with me - my friends shall be your friends - you will take your position as the wife of Howard Jeffries, Jr., - and you will win the respect of the world as you have won mine -

Annie

(Much affected) You're very good - but

(Shake her head)

Mrs. Jeffries

You must try and love me as I have learned to love you.

Annie

I don't have to learn - I think you're just fine - and I do love you, but -- I don't see myself in that -- that -- merry-go-round business - you know- that show life -- your friends won't like me - I wouldn't last twenty minutes with 'em - my style would simply jar them -to pieces -- six months ago I'd have jumped at it -- but now -- I --- I see things differently and I --- it won't do -- it won't do -- and no one knows that better than you -

Mrs. Jeffries

Annie -- I must repay you in some measure --

Annie

You have repaid me -- why the thought that I'd done something to make you happy has been a constant joy to me --

Mrs. Jeffries

But I'm not happy -- Annie, I'm not happy - you saved me from disgrace - but

(Shakes her head intently)

My sense of justice rebels - I shouldn't have allowed it --

Annie

But it's done now and - I don't see the use of raking up the past -- and worrying over what can't be helped -- Mr. Brewster is doing the same thing - you're all crying over spilled milk

and -- and what's the use --

(Bell)

Excuse me ---

(Business - goes)

I'll bet it's someone wants some information that will keep the public posted up-to-date.

(Opens door)

Mr. Jeffries -- won't you come in -

Mr. Jeffries

Thank you -

)(Enter Howard Jeffries, Sr., D. R., - he bows to Mrs. Jeffries and Annie)

Annie

Won't you --- sit down?

Mr. Jeffries

Thank you - no --- I -- prefer to stand -- I'll be as brief as possible -

(Pause)

I expected to find you here, Alicia, after you expressed yourself as you did this morning - but I hope I'm not too late to save you from the folly you contemplate.

Mrs. Jeffries

Folly?

Mr. Jeffries

A very mild criticism of the suggestion to foist this young woman into our midst - believe me - harsher terms will be used by our friends -

(Strikes back of chair)

It's folly - culpable - almost criminal folly -

Mrs. Jeffries

Mr. Jeffries!

Mr. Jeffries

(To Annie) Young woman! You and you alone are responsible for the whole Underwood tragedy -

Mrs. Jeffries

She is not responsible -

Mr. Jeffries

Mr. Jeffreis

You and you alone are responsible for the implication of my son inthis disgraceful scandal -

Mrs. Jeffries

No - no, Howard -

Mr. Jeffries

You have separated father and son -

Mrs. Jeffries

Your son is going abroad with you at her request - what more can you ask -

Mr. Jeffries

Alicia - please -

(To Annie)

You have destroyed the friendship that has existed for years between Mr. Brewster and myself - and now you have come between me and my wife ---

Mrs. Jeffries

Howard - Howard you're unjust ~~and~~ - cruel -

(Goes to door L. - opens it)

Mr. Jeffries

(To Annie) It's the truth - isn't it --- answer me --

(Enter Brewster D. L., followed by Howard)

Mrs. Jeffries

Mr. Brewster.

Mr. Jeffries

Brewster -

Mrs/ Jeffries

Mr. Jeffries is asking for the truth --- and I want him to know it.

Mr. Jeffries

Yes -

(Points to Annie)

Inwant the truth -- and I want her to know it -- I want the whole world to know it.

Mr. Jeffries

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Mrs. Jeffries

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Mr. Jeffries

Mr. Brewster.

Mr. Jeffries

Brewster -

Mrs. Jeffries

Mr. Jeffries is asking for the truth --- and I want him to know it.

Mr. Jeffries

Yes -
(Points to Annie)
I want the truth -- and I want her to know it -- I want the whole world to know it.

(To Annie)
Your existende is a menace to society -
(Business of exclanations from Brewster and Mrs. Jeffries)
Your presence blights and destroys everyone with whom you oome in contact -
(Business of exclamations)
God only knows how you have succeeded in blinding my wife,- my son - and the eminent Mr. Brewster to your real character- but I am determined to prevent your doing further damage - and to that end I shall use every means at my disposal to drive you out of this community -
(Business of exclamations)

Howard

Father ---
(Business)
Annie -- I8d rather you wouldn't listen to any more of these insults -

Mr. Jeffries

So - you've changed your mind once more - she's won you away again, eh?

Howard

She's my wife and -

Mr. Jeffries

Don't you want to know the truth -

Brewster

Do you?

Mr. Jeffries

Mr. Brewster -

Brewster

When you do you will retract every statement you have made -- in plain language, sir - you'll eat your own words --

Mr. Jeffries

How dare you, sir -- How dare you -

Brewster

(To Annie - who goes up stage) Don't go, Annie -
(Business - Annie rushes off stage D. L.)

Brewster

Let me inform you,Mr. Jeffries -- that the letter Underwood wrote just before his death -- was addressed to Mrs. Howard Jeffies Senior, your wife, and not to your daughter-in-law -

Mrs. Jeffries

Yes - Howard --- I ---- I am the woman who called on him the night of his death -- you know we were old friends -

(Mr. Jeffries stares at her in amazement - then bursts out laughing)

Brewster

It is perfectly true -

Mr. Jeffries

And do you expect me to believe such a ridiculous statement as that - Mr. Brewster - a statement made palpably for the purpose of changing my opinion of my son's wife --

(To Mrs. Jeffries)

It's very self-sacrificing -- and very noble of you to try and shield her -- but -- I hope you don't really think that I am fool enough to believe such a wild - absurdities - ha - it's almost laughable -

Brewster

A moment ago you were clamoring for the truth - and nothing butthe truth would satisfy you -- now you know it - you won't believe it --

Mr Jeffries

Truth may be stranger than fiction, but it's not as strange as all that -

Mrs. Jeffries

I assure you

Mr. Jeffries

Alicia -- this girl has deceived you -- but shecan't hoodwink me ---

Brewster

Jeffries, you deserve to be lied to for the rest of your life.

Mr. Jeffries

Sir, I --

(Business)

Come, Alicia ---

xMrs. Jeffries

(To Howard) You believe me, Howard --

Howard

Yes -- Mr. Brewster toldme -- in there.

Mr. Jeffries

Alicia, I am waiting -

Mrs. Jeffries

Good-bye, Howard --
(Squeezes Brewster's hand, and exit with Mr. Jeffries)

Mr. Brewster

Whatever your step-mother may have done, Howard, the punishment more than fits the crime. Well --- good-bye -
(Brewster about to go - Howard stops him - takes his hand)

Howard

Thank - you, thank - you --- Mr. Brewster

Brewster

That's all right, my boy --- your wifehas made a pretty good fight for you -- I only hope you're worth it --- Good-bye ---
(Exit D.L.. Business - as soon as Brewster exits - Howard rushes up stage - knocks at door)

Howard

Annie - Annie --

Annie

What is it?

Howard

They've gone -- they've gone

Annie

(Enter D. L.) Well -- aren't you going with them?

Howard

No -- old girl - I am not.

Mrs. Jeffries

(To Howard) You believe me, Howard --

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Annie - Annie --

Annie

What is it?

Howard

They've gone -- they've gone

Annie

(Enter D.L.) Well -- aren't you going with them?

Howard

No -- old girl - I am not.

Annie

Howard --- don't call me "old girl" -

Howard

Why not -

Anniee

Becauseit's true--
(Business - Howard kisses her and takes her in his arms)

-:- "C U R T A I N" -:-

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